

U.S. Coast Guardsmen (left) Friday help transfer equipment on to a boat of New York State Police divers in rough seas off Moriches New York. The divers efforts to retrieve the flight data recorders were thwarted by storms which resulted in heavy seas (Reuters photo)

U.S. team in Saudi blast probe meets eyewitnesses

DUBAI (R) — A U.S. task force has interviewed hundreds of American soldiers who were at the site of last month's truck bombing that killed 19 airmen in Saudi Arabia, a U.S. military official said on Saturday.

Task force spokesman Colonel Richard Bridges, speaking on the second day of a visit to Dhahran, said the team was "on track" and interviews "were going very well."

"We have interviewed several hundred U.S. military personnel involved in the blast, from the four-star general down to the lowest airmen," he told Reuters by telephone from Dhahran in eastern Saudi Arabia.

"We have also talked with U.S. investigators," he added. He said the team, headed by

retired U.S. Army General Wayne Downing, had talked mostly to soldiers who were in the Khobar Towers military housing complex at the time of the June 25 blast.

The task force would visit other sites in the kingdom where U.S. military personnel are located to assess "the entire security situation," Col. Bridges added.

The U.S. said on Wednesday it would develop a sweeping plan to protect U.S. troops worldwide against terrorists using chemical and biological weapons as well as massive bombs.

U.S. Defence Secretary William Perry gave Gen. Downing, a former chief of U.S. Special Operations, responsibility to assess the circumstances surrounding the

Khobar bombing and other protection measures in the Gulf and Middle East.

The truck bomb carrying 3,000 pounds (1,350 kilograms) of explosives tore the face off building 131 at the Khobar complex where U.S. airmen were based as part of a mission to enforce a Western-imposed no-fly zone in southern Iraq after the 1991 Gulf war that ejected Iraqi troops from Kuwait.

No arrests have been announced in connection with the blast.

Gen. Downing's report is to be completed by Aug. 15 and will be used to assess security for U.S. troops in the region.

Asked if the team had made any requests to interview Saudi eyewitnesses, Col. Bridges said: "I don't know of

any requests to interview Saudi eyewitnesses. That's not to say we won't do that, but we don't think it's necessary at this time."

Col. Bridges said the task force's work was separate from the FBI and Saudi criminal investigation into the blast, which wounded several hundred. But he said the team was cooperating with the FBI.

Concern in the United States over the safety of its troops abroad was heightened after the Khobar Towers bomb, less than a year after a car bomb exploded at a U.S.-run Saudi national guard training centre in Riyadh in November 1995.

Four Saudis were beheaded for the earlier attack, in which five Americans and two Indians died.



KING ABDULLAH REMEMBERED: His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan, the Regent, accompanied by His Royal Highness Prince Rashid Bin Al Hassan, visits the tomb of the Late King Abdullah Bin Al Hussein on the anniversary of his martyrdom and recited verses of the Holy Koran and laid the wreath on the tomb. Other Royal family members, acting Prime Minister Abdullah Ensour, Cabinet ministers, members of the Senate and deputies also visited the tomb and recited verses of the holy Koran (Petra photo)

Mubarak attackers admit to support from Sudan

CAIRO (AFP) — Three Muslim militants accused of attempting to assassinate Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak admitted in an interview Saturday that they had received support from Sudan.

The Arab daily Al Hayat interviewed the Egyptians, Abdul Karim Al Nadi Abdul Radi, Safwat Hassan Abdul Ghani and Siddiq Hafez Mohammed in Ethiopia, where they are on trial for the June 1995 attack on Mr. Mubarak in Addis Ababa.

Asked if the attempt on Mr. Mubarak had received support from Sudan, Mr. Abdul Radi said "the Sudanese government is our sole comfort, this government raises the banner of righteousness to raise up Islam and the Muslims."

Mr. Abdul Ghani said he had "lived several years in Sudan with a number of our brothers in the Gamaa Islamiya in a farm given over to us" before "being asked to go to Addis Ababa." The Gamaa Islamiya, which claimed to have failed attack on Mr. Mubarak, has led an armed campaign against the Egyptian government which has left 1,029 dead since 1992. Mr. Abdul Ghani said the weapons used in the attack "entered Ethiopia in a diplomatic pouch to avoid search by customs," without specifying which country's diplomatic pouch was used.

Sudan admits to food shortage in 'some parts' of south

KHARTOUM (AFP) — Sudan admitted there was a food shortage "in some parts" of the south of the country, criticising donors for not providing enough aid, the official daily Al Engaz Al Watani reported on Saturday.

State Minister for Social Planning Majzoub Al Khalifa, quoted by the paper, called reports of food shortage by the U.N. World Food Programme "contradictory to reality" and "a lie coming from a hostile political campaign." But he added that the system of taking food supplies to the south by plane "was the

main reason for a sort of food shortage in some parts of the south."

Mr. Khalifa said the government had contacted the U.N. to "explain the situation about the reports", adding that Khartoum was "committed to offering relief to needy people and rebels even in areas not under government control."

"Planes are constantly flying food supplies from Lukuchok in Kenya, Khartoum and Al Obeid (west Sudan) to affected people in the south" under the U.N.'s operation life-line-Sudan, he said. But he said flying food was

"expensive and inefficient" consuming up to 50 per cent of relief budgets. Aid provided by donors has been "meager compared to the actual need," Mr. Khalifa said, adding that only 11 million of a pledged \$107 million has been given by donors, most of which goes in to air expenses. Mr. Khalifa praised the U.N. for choosing the town of Malakal, 700 kilometres south of Khartoum as a distribution point for food to the south, saying it was "accessible to river traffic and close to the needy areas."

Palestinian cabinet urges fight against Jewish settlements in West Bank, Gaza

NABLUS, West Bank (AFP) — The cabinet of Palestinian President Yasser Arafat called on Palestinians Saturday to fight against the confiscation of land by Jewish settlers.

"The fight against settlements and the confiscation of land is a national duty," the cabinet said in a declaration issued by the official Palestinian news agency WAM.

The cabinet, which met Friday the northern West Bank town of Nablus on

Friday, threw its "support behind the residents in the villages of Qaryut and Turmus Ayya, between Ramallah and Nablus, who stood firm against the aggression by the settlers."

The Israeli army fired in the air on Friday to break up a rally of 150 Palestinians protesting work to enlarge a Jewish settlement on the West Bank.

The demonstration called by Ramallah's Islamic Committee Against Settlement took place near

Shilo to protest the seizure of land to increase the size of the settlement.

Settlers threw stones at the protesters and attacked some of them with clubs. They also smashed the windcreens of cars belonging to Palestinian journalists.

Three Palestinians were hurt in the clashes, including a cameraman with the television channel WTN who was hit on the head and back by settlers and taken to hospital by ambulance.

The Israeli military imposed a curfew on the village of Turmus Ayya after the demonstration.

The Palestinian cabinet called for the immediate lifting of the curfew.

It also called on Israel to "quickly" withdraw its troops from the volatile West Bank town of Hebron, conforming to its commitments under the Palestinian autonomy accords.

Israel was to pull out most of its troops in March under the agreement.

Palestinians are losing ground to Israel in hoped-for capital

By Said Ghazali
The Associated Press

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM — The lights go out early in Arab East Jerusalem. After sundown, storekeepers along Salahadin Street pull down their shutters and the few restaurants close for lack of customers.

Just 15 miles (24 kilometres) from East Jerusalem's main shopping avenue, traffic jams the commercial district in the West Bank town of Ramallah, where dozens of stores, boutiques and discos have opened in recent months.

The shift in action is only one of many signs that the Palestinians are losing ground in East Jerusalem, which they hope to turn into the capital of their own state.

The new right-wing Israeli government recently revoked the residency permits of hundreds of Palestinians in the city and is preparing to start building another big Jewish neighbourhood in

East Jerusalem.

At the same time, Yasser Arafat's Palestinian National Authority (PNA) has quietly shut several offices in Jerusalem, opting to avoid a showdown it feels it would only lose.

And plans to build Palestinian neighbourhoods in East Jerusalem with \$30 million from Saudi Arabia have been thwarted by Israel's refusal to grant construction permits. So the Saudis have kept their aid, and East Jerusalem's worsening housing shortage has forced thousands of Palestinians to move to the suburbs in the West Bank autonomy zone.

PNA officials acknowledge that many of Jerusalem's Arab residents no longer look to Mr. Arafat for help and instead try to move under Israel's widening umbrella of services in a de facto recognition of Israeli sovereignty.

"We are losing our credibility in the eyes of the people in Jerusalem because they see us as being unable to do anything for

them," said Anis Al Qaq, deputy director of the Palestinian planning ministry. "People cannot live on national dreams. They need food, health care and education."

Israel annexed East Jerusalem into its capital after capturing it in the 1967 Arab-Israeli war. Today, the city has 405,000 Jewish and 160,000 Palestinian residents.

A key symbol of Palestinian aspirations in East Jerusalem is the PLO headquarters — Oriet House — where Palestinian officials have received foreign leaders and diplomats, much to the chagrin of the Israelis who feel that such meetings undermine their sovereignty.

Israel has threatened to shut down the Oriet House and other Palestinian offices in East Jerusalem, arguing that the autonomy agreement restricts all Palestinian authority activity to the self-rule areas in the West Bank and Gaza.

But beyond symbolic meetings with foreign visitors, there seems

to be little activity at the Oriet House.

During a reporter's visit, two clerks sat at wooden desks in a small office. Writing in longhand for lack of computers, they took down complaints from Palestinians seeking help dealing with Israel's bureaucracy.

"Do you really think they can help us?" Mohammad Basti, one of four men waiting in line, asked a neighbour, doubt in his voice. Mr. Basti was desperate after Israel's interior ministry refused residency permits for three of his children born abroad.

It appeared unlikely the Palestinian authority would be able to help. It has been avoiding confrontation with Israel's new government over Jerusalem.

Without fanfare, Mr. Arafat's government recently shut down its statistics bureau in Jerusalem.

Legislator Hanan Ashrawi, who represents Jerusalem, moved her office to Ramallah after she was appointed the Palestinian authority's minister of higher education.

Last month, a reception for neo-governmental organisations was moved from the Oriet House to a nearby hotel after an Israeli warning.

Faisal Hussein, Mr. Arafat's senior official in charge of Jerusalem affairs, puts some of the blame for the Palestinians' eroding position on indifference in the Arab World.

He said his fund-raising trips yield only promises. "I knocked on the door of every Arab capital," Mr. Hussein said at a Palestinian rally last week. "We have no money in our pockets."

Donations by Arab states that used to flow directly to East Jerusalem hospitals and schools are now channelled to Mr. Arafat's government, which, under the peace agreement, can spend the money only in the West Bank and Gaza.

Six cultural institutions in East Jerusalem, including two art centres and a television production office, have closed for lack of aid money. The Hakawati

Theatre, a hub for Palestinian intellectuals, had to cut its staff from 23 to seven, and Director Jamal Ghosheh says it too may shut down.

East Jerusalem's business has been devastated by Israel's five-month blockade of the West Bank and Gaza, which has cut off the city from its hinterland.

The more than 4,000 merchants in that part of Jerusalem have reported sales dropoffs of 50 per cent to 90 per cent. Many business people have opened shops in Ramallah or in Jerusalem's periphery.

"Jerusalem is no longer a commercial centre for the West Bank," said Hijazi Reshek, waiting for customers in his clothing store on Salahadin Street.

Mr. Reshek tries to maintain his optimism: "God willing, Jerusalem's Arab and Islamic identity will be restored. If not in our generation, then in the next one."

JORDAN TELEVISION

PROGRAMME TWO
15:05.....Cartoon — The Mask
15:25.....Bush School
15:35.....Mac & Mudey
15:55.....Olympic Games
17:00.....News Flash
19:00.....Le Journal
19:15.....Olympic Games
22:00.....News in English
22:25.....Olympic Games
01:55.....Varieties
02:25.....Olympic Games

PRAYER TIMES

04:07.....Fajr
05:39.....(Sunrise) Duha
12:42.....Dhuhr
16:23.....'Asr
19:45.....Maghreb
21:16.....'Isha

CHURCHES

St. Mary of Nazareth Church
Sweifeh, Tel. 810740
Assemblies of God Church Tel.
632785.
St. Joseph Church Tel. 624590
Church of the Annunciation Tel.
637440.
De la Salle Church Tel. 661757.
Terra Sancta Church Tel. 622366
Anglican Church Tel. 652826.
Armenian Catholic Church Tel.
771331.
Armenian Orthodox Church Tel.
775261.

JORDAN TIMES DAILY GUIDE AND CALENDAR

St. Ephraim Church Tel. 717151.
Amman International Church
Tel. 652526
Evangelical Lutheran Church
Tel. 824328.
German-speaking Evangelical
Congregation Tel. 845457
The Latter-Day Saints Tel.
654932.
Church of Nazareth Tel.
675691.
The Evangelical Local Church
in Amman Tel. 811295
English-speaking
Latin Catholics Parish Tel.
614190.

WEATHER

Relative hot weather conditions
will prevail with temperatures
above average by 3-5 degrees
centigrade and winds northwesterly
moderate to active. In Aqaba,
winds will be northerly moderate
to active and seas calm.

Min/Max. temp.
Amman.....24/36
Aqaba.....28/41
Deserts.....22/40
Jordan Valley.....28/40

Yesterday's high temperatures:
Amman 36, Aqaba 40 Humidity
readings: Amman 32 per cent,
Aqaba 36 per cent.

USEFUL

TELEPHONE NUMBERS
NIGHT DUTY
AMMAN:
Dr. Khalid Al Tusluq.....757253
Dr. Bahjat Bader.....832642
Dr. Wafiq Qaddumi.....893542
Dr. Nasser Ibrahim.....830432
Firas pharmacy.....661912
Ferdous pharmacy.....778336
Al Asema pharmacy.....637055
Nairoukh pharmacy.....623672
Al Salam pharmacy.....636730
Yacoub pharmacy.....644945
Shmeisani pharmacy.....637660
Najth pharmacy.....847632
IRBID:
Dr. Ahmad Qanu.....281484
Al Quds pharmacy.....(—)
ZARQA:
Dr. Walid Al Akhras.....995743
Khalifah pharmacy.....985417

EMERGENCIES

Food Control Centre.....637111
Civil Defence Department.....661111
Civil Defence Immediate Rescue
Centre.....630341
Civil Defence
Emergency.....199
Rescue Police.....192, 621111, 637777
Fire Brigade.....617101
Blood Bank.....775121
Highway Police.....843402
Traffic Police.....896390
Public Security Dept.....630321

Hotel Complaints.....605800
Price Complaints.....661176
Water & Sewage Complaints.....897467
Amman Municipality Complaints
Centre.....787111
Telephone Information (directory
assistance).....121
Overseas Calls.....010230
Central Amman Telephone
Repair.....623101
Abdali Tel. Repairs.....661101
Jordan Television.....773111
Radio Jordan.....774111
Water Authority.....680100
J. Electricity Authority.....815615
RJ Flight Information.....08-53200
Queen Alia Intl. Airport 08-53200

HOSPITALS

AMMAN:
Hussein Medical Centre.....813813/32
Khalidi Maternity.....64281/6
Al-Khaleel Maternity.....642441/2
Jabal Amman Maternity.....642362
Malhas, J. Amman.....636140
Palestine, Shmeisani.....607071
Shmeisani Hospital.....669131
University Hospital.....845845
Al-Muasher Hospital.....667227/9
The Islamic, Abdali.....666126/37
Al-Ahli, Abdali.....664164/6
Italian, Al-Muhajreen.....771101/3
Al-Bashir.....775112/6
Army, Marka.....89161/15
Queen Alia Hospital.....602240/50
Amal Hospital.....674155

The Arab Centre for Heart and
Special Surgery.....865199
ZARQA:
Govt. Hospital
(09)983323
Zarqa National Hospital
(09)900560
Ibn Sina Hospital.....(09)986732
Al Hikma Modern Hospital
(09)990990
IRBID:
Princess Basma Hospital
(02)275555
Greek Catholic Hospital
(02)272275
Ibn Al Nafies Hospital
(02)247100

FOR THE TRAVELLER

QUEEN ALIA INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT
This information is supplied by
Royal Jordanian (RJ) information
department at the Queen Alia
International Airport Tel.
(08)53200-5, where it should
always be verified. Information on
other flights can be supplied on
phone 08 (52700)

ARRIVALS

Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights
09:15.....Dhahran (add) (RJ)
09:30.....Jeddah (RJ)

09:55.....Larnaca (RJ)
10:05.....Riyadh (RJ)
10:10.....Dubai, Abu Dhabi (RJ)
10:20.....Beirut (RJ)
10:50.....Doha, Bahrain (RJ)
16:05.....New York (RJ)
16:55.....Amsterdam, Brussels (RJ)
18:00.....Paris (RJ)
18:25.....Chicago, Amsterdam (RJ)
18:50.....London (RJ)
19:15.....Athens (RJ)
19:25.....Ankara, Istanbul (RJ)
19:30.....Madrid, Geneva (RJ)
19:45.....Frankfurt (RJ)
20:25.....Rome (RJ)
20:30.....Tunis (RJ)
20:40.....Vienna (RJ)
01:10.....Cairo (RJ)

Other Flights

06:30.....Tel Aviv (LY)
12:30.....Doha (Q7)
13:40.....Bahrain (GF)
15:05.....Moscow (SU)
16:30.....Dubai (EK)
20:35.....Cairo (MS)
21:10.....Beirut (ME)
22:15.....London, Beirut (BA)
23:20.....Istanbul (TK)
23:30.....Athens (OA)
01:20.....Amsterdam, Beirut (KL)
02:30.....Belgrade (GU)

Royal Wings (RW) Flights

09:50.....Aqaba (RW)
19:45.....Tel Aviv (RW)

Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights
06:10.....Madrid (RJ)
06:35.....Beirut (RJ)
09:30.....Frankfurt (RJ)
12:00.....Tunis (RJ)
12:15.....Vienna (RJ)
12:15.....Ankara, Istanbul (RJ)
12:15.....Rome (RJ)
12:30.....Amsterdam, New York (RJ)
13:20.....Athens (RJ)
13:25.....London (RJ)
21:10.....Cairo (RJ)
21:20.....Jeddah (RJ)
22:00.....Damascus (RJ)
22:20.....Abu Dhabi, Dubai (RJ)
22:45.....Singapore, Jakarta (RJ)
22:50.....Bangkok (RJ)
23:45.....Sanaa (RJ)

Other Flights

06:40.....London (RJ)
07:25.....Tel Aviv (LY)
09:15.....London
12:00.....Sanaa (TY)
14:30.....Doha (GF)
16:05.....Moscow (SU)
21:25.....Cairo (MS)
02:30.....Amsterdam (KL)
03:30.....Belgrade (GU)
04:00.....Athens (OA)
06:00.....Istanbul (TK)
07:45.....Beirut, London (BA)

Royal Wings (RW) Flights

10:00 Amman (arriving at Marka
Airport from QAIA) (RW)

20:30.....Aqaba (RW)

HILAZ RAILWAY TRAIN

Dep. Amman.....8:00 a.m. every Monday
At Damascus.....5:00 p.m. every Monday
Dep. Damascus.....7:30 a.m. every Sunday
At Amman.....5:00 p.m. every Sunday

MARKET PRICES

Upper/lower price in Jds per kg.
Apricot.....850/500
Apple.....700/500
Banana.....600/600
Banana (mulhammar).....520/520
Banana (imported).....800/600
Cabbage.....200/180
Carrot.....130/80
Cauliflower.....230/140
Cucumber (large).....130/80
Cucumber (small).....220/130
Eggplant.....190/140
Garlic.....650/400
Lemon.....630/400
Marrow (large).....250/150
Marrow (small).....440/250
Mulukhiyah.....120/80
Onion (dry).....130/80
Okra.....700/500
Orange.....400/300
Plum.....350/250
Peanut.....500/300
Peach.....670/400
Pepper (hot).....300/200
Pepper (sweet).....300/200
Potato.....350/220
String Bean.....500/300
Sweet melon.....200/120
Tomato.....120/70
Water melon.....100/70

HRH Princess Basma pro
for Women. Princess B
demonstrated an interest i
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Princess Rah participation

By a Jordan Times
Staff Reporter

Amman (J.T.) — HRH Princess Rahma Bint Al Hassan addressed the first Euro-Mediterranean Regional Conference of the International Award, held this year in Malta, saying that female participation in Jordan's own Crown Prince Award has been a considerable achievement in the Arab Muslim World.

In a speech she delivered on behalf of HRH Crown Prince Hassan and entitled "Youth Affairs and the Role of the Crown Prince Award in Jordan," Princess Rahma briefed the audience on the status of young people in Jordan, and then moved to explaining how the Crown Prince Award has affected the lives of the contestants and winners.

She said that, "Since the inauguration of the award scheme in 1984 with 45 participants, the award has grown quite considerably. The participation between 1995/1996 is 1,777, with a total of just under 10,000 young people gaining awards at different levels over the past few years."

She added that Jordan was particularly proud of the active female participation in the award, which is almost 45%, and which has proved cynics wrong in their belief that female participation in an Arab Muslim country would be hard to achieve.

Investig to sol

(Continued from page 1)

helping to provide a high-resolution map of the ocean floor that will help in mapping out the debris field," Mr. Hume told AFP in a telephone interview.

Towed behind the ship was a "pinger locator system," a 1,100-kilometre cable designed to pick up the pings of the data recorders.

The first step in the probe will be to salvage as much of the plane as possible and reassemble it, or at least the key portions.

Aeronautics experts from Boeing and elsewhere will assist in assembling the retrieved bits of fuselage.

A three-dimensional reconstruction will allow investigators to determine how much damage was done to the aircraft before the crash and what pieces, if any, are missing.

"It's gonna be a painstaking process if it is a missile or a small bomb. Look at Lockerbie," said Mr. Leonard.

Referring to the 1988 crash over Scotland that was later blamed on a terrorist bombing, Mr.



HRH Princess Basma presides over a meeting of the Jordanian National Forum for Women. Princess Basma voiced appreciation for the women who have demonstrated an interest in the work of the forum and praised the board for shouldering the responsibility of supporting women's efforts to make tangible gains in their right to equality (Petra photo)

Princess Rahma commends women's participation in Crown Prince Award

By a Jordan Times Staff Reporter

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In the end, Princess Rahma said she was proud of the success of the Crown Prince Award scheme, adding that Jordan was committed to its continued success and its promotion in other neighbouring countries.

President of Malta Ugo Mifsud Bonnici on Friday presided over the Golden Awards Ceremony and handed prizes to deserving young Maltese women and men at the Republican Palace in Malta.

The ceremony coincides with both the first Euro-Mediterranean Regional Conference of the International Award and the International Award's annual meeting.

The International Award which is presented in different countries under different names (such as Jordan's Crown Prince Award), is presented to youth in 65 different participating countries and was first inaugurated by Prince Edward of the U.K. Each country selects and awards its young citizens in ceremonies such as the recent one in Malta.

President Bonnici gave an opening speech Saturday in which he welcomed Princess Rahma and other participants in the conference, stressing on the importance of such an event and its positive effects on youth throughout the world.

He said that the awards teach competing participants self-confidence, independence, and empowers them with a sense of leadership and cooperation, as well as a deeper understanding of life among all sectors of society.

Dr. Bonnici also stressed the need for other countries to join in future conferences.

Prince Edward, of the United Kingdom and president of the International Council of the Duke of Edinburgh Award also addressed the conference thanking the Maltese government for its hospitality, and stressing the importance of dealing with youth issues as well as helping them develop to lead a more meaningful and progressive life.

Prince Edward added that the rules and principles on which the award is built are concerned "with empowering young people to take greater responsibility for their own lives, to discover new talents, to advocate on behalf of others and to take positive action in the community."

Such events, he said, provide youth with suitable grounds which could help them become more creative and develop their sense of social belonging and participation, regardless of the differing norms of their respective societies.

Jordan, PNA sign health care protocol

AMMAN (Petra) — Jordan and the Palestine National Authority (PNA) Saturday signed a protocol on cooperation in health care and other medical affairs following three days of talks here between their official teams.

The protocol, signed by Minister of Health Aref Bataineh and his Palestinian counterpart Riyad Zaaoun, calls for cooperation in providing primary health care services.

These include matters related to sanitation, food safety, endemic and communicable diseases, family and community medicine, nursing and an exchange of information about contagious diseases should an outbreak occur.

Jordan will offer medical treatment to Palestinians at the Ministry of Health centres and hospitals and will grant free medical treatment to 10 Palestinian patients a year over the next three years if they are formally referred by the PNA.

Oncology and kidney disease patients, however, are not covered under this article.

Transfer of patients to and from Jordan by ambulance will be provided by Jordan with prior approval from health authorities on both sides.

Furthermore, the protocol provides medium and long term training courses for medical staff, with Jordan agreeing to train up to 16 health officials annually.

Jordan will also train up to five PNA health officials in nursing, community medicine, and medical registration procedures.

The two sides agreed to exchange information about pharmaceutical policies and registration, and control and distribution of medicines and vaccines.

Jordan will test vaccines for the PNA at Ministry of Health laboratories, and the PNA will provide similar facilities for Jordan.

Both parties have agreed on exchanging visits by health and medical teams. They also agreed to form a joint committee to follow up on the implementation of this five-year protocol, and to meet twice a year in Palestine and Jordan to study the progress of their joint activities and possible amendments that would enhance the protocol.



Minister of Health Aref Bataineh and his Palestinian counterpart Riyad Zaaoun Saturday sign a protocol for cooperation in health care and other medical affairs (Petra photo)

PSD announces mass arrests Jordan to participate in Tunis drug conference

AMMAN (Petra) — In the second major round-up of alleged drug traffickers, the Public Security Department (PSD) issued a statement Saturday announcing that last week its units arrested a total of 35 suspects in three separate attempts at drug trafficking through Jordanian territory.

The suspects were Jordanian and other nationals. They were referred to trial for committing three separate drug crimes. The arrests make this the second major round-up of alleged drug-trafficking rings in Jordan in July.

The director of the PSD administration said that in one instance, in cooperation with units from the Jordan Armed Forces, the Security Department seized 159 kilograms of hashish at a location near the northern borders with Syria. No date of arrest was given in the statement.

The PSD said that on July 10 officers arrested another group of traffickers and found 67 kilograms of hashish, 4.5 kilograms of heroin and a large quantity of other drugs allegedly smuggled from a neighbouring Arab country and destined for another.

In another case, customs officials and the PSD units on July 14 stopped a car entering Jordan at the Ramtha border, the report said.

The car bore a licence plate from a neighbouring Arab country, the PSD statement said without providing further details.

When the vehicle was searched, police said they found 31,570 pills of captagon hidden in one of the car's compartments.

On July 16, said the PSD statement, police units seized 17 kilograms of hashish and one kilogramme of hashish oil near the eastern borders of Jordan.

In a related development, according to the PSD announcement, Jordan will take part in an Arab conference in Tunis on July 22 to discuss the drug trafficking problem and the modern technology available to pinpoint drug plantations.

The Security Department will be represented at the meeting by Colonel Nazih Shreideh, director of the Anti-Narcotics Bureau who said that the delegations will discuss cooperation among Arab states concerning the arrest of drug traffickers and the exchange of information on combating such criminal activity.

Consumer protection group study says price index increases 4.24 %

By Samir Hijawi
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — A study conducted by the Jordanian Consumer Protection Society (JCPS) last month indicates that the prices of 726 commodities and services have increased approximately 4.24 per cent in the first half of 1996 compared with the price index at the end of 1995.

The study, conducted in Amman, Zarqa and Irbid — three cities comprised of nearly 75 per cent of the

nation's population — said prices of 17 commodities rose by 4.1 per cent. These included fruits, vegetables, groceries, fish, poultry and meat, stationery, clothing, shoes, as well as electricity, water, fuel, rent and maintenance services.

The average increase in prices was calculated on average prices recorded in the first six months of this year compared to the rates available at the end of 1995.

The survey showed that an average Jordanian family spends 43 per cent on

food, 25.6 per cent on housing, 8.9 per cent on clothing, 1.5 per cent on shoes, 3.9 per cent on furniture, 5.9 per cent on health services and medicines, two per cent on stationery and 4.35 on education.

Furthermore, the survey showed that the average prices of vegetables rose in the first half of 1996 by 13.1 per cent, groceries 2.4 per cent, other food supplies 2.96 per cent, water, telephone and fuel 15.86 per cent, and fish, poultry and meat 6.04 per cent.

Experts see need for PNA laws to encourage development of civil society

AMMAN (J.T.) — A three-day seminar on the future of civil society in the Palestinian self-rule areas Saturday concluded with a call on the Palestinian National Authority (PNA) to draft legislation that would encourage the building of Palestinian civil and social institutions, and guarantee their rights.

The Palestinian and other Arab delegates, representing human rights groups, urged the PNA to link social institutions in Palestine with those operating in the diaspora.

Lahib Qamhawi, deputy director of the Jordan branch of the Arab Organisation for Human Rights, presented a working paper to the meeting reviewing the consequences of Israel's continued occupation of Palestinian land, saying that Israel has practically ruined the necessary infrastructure for the advancement of

social and political life of the Arab population.

He said that although Israel is to blame for the present "pitiable situation," the Palestinian leadership bears part of the responsibility as well, having concerned themselves with building Palestinian civil and social institutions outside rather than within the Palestinian lands.

He said this policy, which has further weakened Palestinian institutions under Israeli occupation, has not been corrected by serious efforts on the part of the PNA to rebuild institutions that apply the genuine concept of democracy.

Dawad Hamad, director of the Middle East Studies Centre (MESC), said the event was convened to allow the delegates representing different political ideologies to assess the PNA's experiment in re-establishing civil society in

the Palestinian territories.

He added that genuine economic and social development can only take place in a climate of freedom and independence.

In its statement Saturday, the seminar stressed that Israel's withdrawal from Palestinian lands and the return of displaced Palestinians to their homes constitute a basic requirement for the establishment of civil and democratic life in Palestine.

The statement said that Israel's occupation of Palestinian lands remains the main obstacle to create a civil society, adding that the Jewish settlements pose a serious danger, threatening the Palestinian people's unity and Palestine's territorial integrity.

The seminar was organised by the MESC at the Jerusalem Hotel in Amman.

Investigators looking for tiny hints to solve mystery in TWA probe

(Continued from page 1)

helping to provide a high-resolution map of the ocean floor that will help in mapping out the debris field," Mr. Hume told AFP in a telephone interview.

Towed behind the ship was a "pinger locator system," a 1,100-kilometre tube designed to pick up the pings of the data recorders.

The first step in the probe will be to salvage as much of the plane as possible and reassemble it, or at least the key portions.

Aeronautics experts from Boeing and elsewhere will assist in assembling the retrieved bits of fuselage. A three-dimensional reconstruction will allow investigators to determine how much damage was done to the aircraft before the crash and what pieces, if any, are missing.

"It's gonna be a painstaking process if it is a missile or a small bomb. Look at Lockerbie," said Mr. Leonard.

Referring to the 1988 crash over Scotland that was later blamed on a terrorist bombing, Mr.

Leonard said: "At least, it landed on land." FBI agent Jim Kallsstrom, leading an anti-terrorist task force who warned that the probe could take days or weeks, added: "We're gonna look for residues, certain striking patterns. We're going to look for the way the metal is shaped or fragmented if it is. We're going to look at all those things."

Although the search effort is only entering its third day, already intriguing evidence has been found pointing to a devastating explosion on board the jetliner.

The Washington Post cited a senior law enforcement official as saying that metal debris from the aircraft was twisted outward, suggesting a bomb or other sort of explosion. But it was not immediately clear what caused the blast.

The London Times reported on Saturday that U.S. officials were investigating a report that Iranian terrorists brought down the plane because of information received from what the newspaper described as a "reliable informant." "He is an Iranian exile who

has proved a very serious contact in the past," a U.S. official said. Chemical residues can indicate if an explosive brought down the plane, and also what sort of explosive. Chemical residues may also be found in the bodies of the victims.

But no answers will be forthcoming quickly, said Mr. Leonard. "It's a very time-consuming process," he warned.

Meanwhile, the theories about the TWA Flight 800 are becoming more intriguing — a missile fired from the shore, a World Trade Center connection, a terrorist who didn't make the plane at Athens.

But without solid evidence, the FBI stopped short of saying the Jumbo jet was bombed out of the sky.

"We're not prepared to say that until we know it's true," Mr. Kallsstrom stressed Friday night.

Meanwhile, agents began contacting informants in the terrorist underworld, according to federal investigator who spoke to the Associated Press on condi-

tion of anonymity.

"It would be foolish not to be out there seeking every bit of information we can, from any corner," the source said.

Investigators are seeking tips from an Internet site and a toll-free number.

The New York Post reported Saturday the FBI thinks there was a bomb in luggage in a rear cargo hold. The newspaper quotes a law-enforcement source as saying, "They're all willing to bet it was a bomb. Now they have to figure out who placed it."

CBS television reported that a Lebanese man on a list of people with connections to terrorist organisations was supposed to be on board the doomed plane when it left Athens for New York, but missed the flight.

U.S. State Department spokeswoman Elaine McDevitt said it was "the first we've heard" of any of the reports, and couldn't confirm them.

Bahrain, Kuwait hold security talks

(Continued from page 1)

ed loans totalling about \$64 million to Bahrain in the past month to help finance power projects.

The three countries have pledged to stand by Bahrain, the least wealthy Gulf Arab state, since unrest flared in December 1994 among Bahrainis who are asking for restoration of parliament dissolved in 1975. At least 24 people have been killed in the disturbances.

Earlier this year Saudi Arabia decided to give Bahrain all the revenue from a shared oilfield in a move analysts said would help the Bahrain government in its struggle to eradicate its budget deficit while paying the cost of the civil disturbances.

The agency did not say how long Sheikh Khalifa would stay but said he would go on to the United Arab Emirates.

WHAT'S GOING ON

JERASH FESTIVAL

- Concert by UAE singer Ahlam at the South Theatre at 8:30 p.m.
- Concert by Moroccan Wajdah Troupe of Andalusian Songs at Artimes Theatre at 8:30 p.m.
- Recital of Lebanese folklore poetry of Zakiyah Al Dahrour band at the Sound and Light Theatre at 8:30 p.m.
- Performance by the Jordanian Armed Forces Musical Band, Aqaba Band of Popular Art, Kafraiah Youth Centre, the Nile Band of Popular Art, the Ramtha Band of Popular Art, and Qatari National Band of Popular Art at the Main Theatre at 8:30 p.m.
- Concert by talented children at Grace Theatre at 7:30 p.m.
- Poetry recital by Khaz'al Al Majidi, Khaz'al Mansour, Abdullah Al Sikan, Zuleikha Abu Rishah, and Youssef Abu Loz at Darat Al Funun, Jabal Welbedh (8:30 p.m. - 8:30 p.m.)

FILM

- "Jamal Abdul Nasser" at Abdul Hameed Shawwan Foundation, Jabal Amman at 8:00 p.m.

EXHIBITIONS

- "Muslims in Britain" exhibition at the British Council, until July 24.
- Exhibition of works by Sudanese artist Rashid Diab entitled "The Time of Silence" at Darat Al Funun, Jabal Welbedh. Also displaying works by contemporary Arab artists, until July 31.
- Ceramics exhibition at Jordan Design and Trade Centre, off Wadi Saqra Street (Tel. 699141/2), until July 25.

More Northern Ireland rioting breaks uneasy calm

BELFAST (R) — Police firing plastic bullets battled stone-throwing rioters in Northern Ireland Saturday, after rival parades ended a few days of uneasy calm and set off more sectarian violence in the British-ruled province.

Around 200 rioters fought running street battles with police in the town of Omagh for three hours early Saturday, smashing property and setting fire to buildings. Police said there were several arrests and some people were taken to hospital.

Catholics who want a united Ireland and Protestants who want the province to stay British held rival parades in the town Friday night and the rioting began afterwards, at around 0100 GMT Saturday. Omagh lies west of Belfast. Police in England made several arrests this week, seizing enough equipment to make 36 bombs and documents in what they said was part of their fight against the IRA (Irish Republican Army).

Following the arrests, eight men were charged in a closely-guarded London court Saturday with conspiracy to cause explosions. Seven of them were from Northern Ireland or the Irish Republic, one from England.

The court ordered all eight to be held in jail until another hearing next Friday.

With Northern Ireland sweltering under a summer heatwave, the incident in Omagh was the first serious

clash since last week's widespread street violence in Belfast and Londonderry.

The worst disturbances since new efforts for peace were launched two years ago have already claimed two lives. The fresh troubles began after police allowed a Protestant march through a Catholic area near the town of Portadown last week.

The march was seen as provocative by Irish nationalists and caused a major rift between the British and Irish governments, the joint sponsors of peace talks that now seem to be faltering.

More than 3,000 people have died in a quarter century of sectarian violence. The majority of Northern Ireland's 1.5 million people are Protestants. Catholics make up 40 per cent.

In Omagh Saturday, crowds of youths threw stones at the police, who responded by using plastic bullets which are not supposed to kill but are used for riot control.

A police spokesman said one officer was wounded in the head but his injuries were not thought to be serious.

Police said they were not aware of any more parades planned Saturday but a nationalist protest over last week's Protestant march is expected near Portadown Sunday.

Tensions are already running high over the next major annual Protestant march, scheduled for Aug. 10 in

Londonderry. London and Dublin called Thursday for a big push in next week's peace talks between the various parties in Northern Ireland, to reestablish what the governments call "the primacy of politics" over violence.

But the talks at Stormont Castle in Belfast, under the chairmanship of former U.S. Senator George Mitchell, have been bogged down so far in procedural detail.

One of the key players, Sinn Fein, has been excluded because the IRA broke a 17-month ceasefire in February and has launched bomb attacks in mainland Britain.

Sinn Fein is the political wing of the IRA, which is fighting to end British rule and build a united Ireland.

"Confidence in the ability of the talks process to deliver meaningful change has already disappeared," Sinn Fein President Gerry Adams said Friday.

The rioting in Omagh will add to the already heavy bill for damage compensation, which the British government said Friday could reach some £20 million (\$30.93 million).

Foreign investment and tourism, both booming since real peace efforts started in 1994, are also likely to be hard hit. The tourism industry is already reporting a flood of holiday cancellations following the events of last week.

Azerbaijani leader purges government over economy

BAKU (R) — Azerbaijan President Heydar Aliyev has fired his prime minister, two other cabinet members and other top government officials in a shake-up aimed at revitalising the wrecked economy.

Mr. Aliyev backed up his purge by lambasting Prime Minister Faid Guliyev and several others during a government meeting broadcast live on state television late Friday.

The 73-year-old leader, speaking of an economic morass, widespread corruption, and slowness in implementing market reforms, personally dressed down official after official before firing them.

Along with Mr. Guliyev, prime minister since 1994, Mr. Aliyev sacked Economy Minister Samed Sadikov, automobile transport chief Arif Aslanov and four other top officials.

Tofiq Azizov was removed as chairman of the State Property Committee but retained his post as a deputy prime minister.

"The state of the economy

is serious. The prime minister must bear responsibility for this situation. Faid Guliyev can no longer remain in his post," said Mr. Aliyev, a former Soviet politburo member.

He said widespread government corruption was hampering market reforms. "I will use the full strictness of the law to bring those officials involved in corruption to justice," he said, although he did not mention any official by name.

The dismissals had been widely anticipated and followed two days of televised meetings between an angry Aliyev and members of the government.

The Transcaucasian former Soviet Republic of Azerbaijan is beginning to develop its vast offshore Caspian Sea oil reserves which could bring it huge wealth.

But it has been among the slowest among post-Soviet states to institute deep economic reforms and living standards remain painfully low, with average salaries for employees in the vast

state sector at below 100,000 manats (\$25) per month.

Some foreign investors eager to put money into what some say could be a "second Kuwait" have pulled out, complaining bitterly of rife corruption and endless bureaucracy.

Mr. Aliyev appears to have acted now because he has fully consolidated his power in the republic of seven million people.

The atmosphere of intrigue and coup allegations that used to surface every few months has subsided and he enjoys pre-eminent control over nearly every area of Azeri political life.

Azerbaijan, which won independence from the Soviet Union in 1991, still faces an unresolved conflict over the disputed region of Nagorno-Karabakh.

The war has killed over 10,000 people and made nearly one million people homeless.

Mr. Aliyev did not say when he would name new ministers.

200 Tutsis reported killed in Burundi massacre

NAIROBI (R) — Burundi's Tutsi-dominated army accused Hutu rebels of massacring up to 200 displaced Tutsis at a camp in the central Gitega region Saturday.

Lieutenant-Colonel Jean-Bosco Daradagwe, a senior official at the Defence Ministry, told Reuters that the attack by rebels of the National Council for the Defence of Democracy (CNDD) early Saturday also left over 500 Tutsis wounded.

Col. Daradagwe's report could not be independently verified and there was no immediate comment from the CNDD.

The latest reported killings follow claims of up to 300 Hutus killed in a series of army operations over the last few weeks in the Gitega region.

Col. Daradagwe said the attack was at Bungeandana Camp in Gitega province.

"It is 200 people killed. Very early today (Saturday) they attacked a large camp of displaced Tutsis," Col. Daradagwe said. He gave no details on the total camp population.

The rebels have stepped up their guerrilla war in Burundi and diplomats and aid workers say as many as 1,000 people are dying daily in the conflict.

More than 150,000 have already died in the past three years in an increasingly brutal war in which aid workers say both sides take no prisoners.

The latest massacre claim follows one early this month in which CNDD forces admitted killing over 80 Tutsi workers and their families at Teza Tea Factory in northwest Burundi.

But CNDD said the tea factory was a military facility and that those killed were soldiers from Burundi's army.

Reports of fresh violence threaten the uneasy collaboration between the army and Burundi's deeply divided and fragile government.

A regional peacekeeping plan backed by Western governments and involving troops from Ethiopia, Uganda and Tanzania is yet to take off because of wrangling within Burundi's government and military circles.

Hutu President Sylvestre Ntibunganya and Tutsi Prime Minister Antoine Nduwayo agreed to the plan at an African summit.



Indonesian President Suharto (right) strikes the gong to open the annual meeting of the Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN) in Jakarta Saturday. Watching on are foreign ministers from Brunei Prince Mohamed Bolkiah (from left), Thailand's Kasem Kasemsri and ASEAN Secretary General Ajit Singh (center) (Reuter photo)

ASEAN opens ministers' meeting by warmly welcoming Burma

JAKARTA (R) — Burma, treated as an outcast by the West for suppressing its pro-democracy movement, was welcomed warmly Saturday by its neighbours in the Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN).

Rebuffing Western calls for sanctions and appeals by Burmese opposition figure Aung San Suu Kyi to isolate Rangoon's military rulers, the seven ASEAN members accorded Burma observer status in a group that represents some of the fastest growing economies in the world.

The meeting's chairman, Indonesian Foreign Minister Ali Alatas, said Burma was making "earnest endeavours" for full membership by the turn of the century.

Since ASEAN was founded almost three decades ago, it has been the vision of its members "that one day all the 10 nations of South East Asia will live in harmony, cooperation and shared prosperity within the fold of the ASEAN family," Mr. Alatas said.

The seven members of ASEAN — Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, Vietnam and Brunei — have made a creed out of not interfering in each other's affairs.

But they say they are exerting quiet diplomacy on Burma at forums like ASEAN, a policy known as "constructive engagement."

"Since we are in the family, we don't have to shout. We only have to whisper," Philippines Foreign Minister Domingo Siazon said Friday.

"We do not believe in isolating our neighbour. We don't believe in sanctions," Thailand's Foreign Minister Amnuay Viravan said.

While Burma is a non-issue so far as ASEAN is concerned, it will come up during next week's ASEAN Regional Forum, which brings the seven nations together with 14 other world powers, including the United States, European Union, China, Japan, Russia, Australia and India.

Indonesia's President Suharto, opening the meeting of foreign ministers, took a swipe at industrialised nations for threatening to raise non-trade issues at the World Trade Organisation's inaugural ministerial meeting in Singapore in December.

Mr. Suharto expressed concern over "the efforts of some developed countries to sidetrack the deliberations... so that the focus will be on matters extraneous to trade."

Countries in the region

have in the past objected to calls by labour organisations to link trade privileges with social issues such as child labour, minimum wages and collective bargaining rights.

ASEAN sources said the foreign ministers' agenda included territorial disputes in the South China Sea.

China has alarmed many in the region by enlarging claims to vast stretches of the South China Sea, which commands key shipping lanes between the Indian and Pacific oceans.

The Spratlys, a scattered series of islands, reefs and atolls in the region, is a related issue.

Believed to be sitting atop bountiful oil and gas reserves, the Spratlys are claimed entirely by China and Taiwan and partly by ASEAN members Vietnam, Malaysia, the Philippines and Brunei.

The ASEAN foreign ministers will discuss progress on their nuclear weapons free zone, over which nuclear powers China and the United States have expressed reservations.

They were also due to discuss an ASEAN Free Trade Area, which contemplates vastly reduced or zero tariffs in an area that encompasses some 425 million people, or larger than Europe.

Chinese air force drops supplies to millions stranded by floods

BEIJING (AFP) — China's air force dropped supplies Saturday to millions trapped by catastrophic flooding, as the country's largest freshwater lake overflowed, threatening embankments containing the mighty Yangtze River.

In the central province of Hunan alone more than five million people have been affected by the Yangtze in Hunan province had gone above the danger level days ago.

The situation is extremely serious," he said. "We're doing everything we can to bring the water level down."

Some 9.3 million people were affected in Hunan, the semi-official China News Service said, adding that road and rail lines had been cut and reservoirs and dams seriously damaged.

In neighbouring Guangxi province, the first three floors of buildings in Liuzhou were submerged and in the worst floods there in 100 years. Roads and railways in the area remained impassable.

"We have no electricity, gas or fresh water. At night we use candles," said a party official by telephone.

Shanghai's Wen Wei Bao newspaper said the flooding in Hunan was the worst in 300 years and had affected 1.49 million people in 2,711 towns and villages.

China's largest freshwater lake overflowed Saturday, and its water continued to rise, a

Hunan flood control official said by telephone.

"By Sunday the water in Dongting Lake is going to be 5.05 metres above danger level," the official said. "That's the highest ever and we don't know what's going to happen."

The official, who did not want to be named, said the middle and lower reaches of the Yangtze in Hunan province had gone above the danger level days ago.

The situation is extremely serious," he said. "We're doing everything we can to bring the water level down."

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China's largest freshwater lake overflowed Saturday, and its water continued to rise, a

people stranded as major tributaries of the Yangtze rose eight to 10 metres (24-30 feet) above the danger level.

Official figures up to July 18 put the death toll nationwide at 716, and even the normally dry far west of China has not been spared.

On Thursday a train from Turfan to Huerge was stranded when rain washed away 254 kilometres of track, the China Youth Daily said, adding that although the 2,000 Chinese and foreign passengers were not in danger it would take until Sunday to rescue them.

President Jiang Zemin has ordered local governments to make flood control their priority and redouble efforts to bring the water level down.

The People's Daily reported.

More than \$15.8 million of aid has poured in from Hong Kong, in addition to \$396,500 million from Red Cross Societies in Canada, Finland, Japan and Sweden.

Flooding happens every year in southern China, and local governments often have no time to complete flood barriers on Yangtze tributaries which cross Hunan, Hubei and Guangxi, feeding into Dongting and nearby lakes.

11-year-old girl arrested in shotgun murder

SAN BERNADINO, California (R) — An 11-year-old girl was under arrest Friday on suspicion of murder and attempted murder in the shotgun death of a 14-year-old boy and the wounding of another boy, also 14, police said.

San Bernardino police spokesman Jim Hamlin said the shooting occurred Thursday afternoon after the boys had taunted the girl. "From what we can gather the boys were in the front yard of the girl's home and were taunting her. We're not very sure just what was said but evidently it was enough to where she felt she had to do something and she got a loaded shotgun that was kept in the house and fired a single round through the front window of the house," Mr. Hamlin said.

He said that when police arrived at the scene, one of the boys was dead and the other was lying on the ground wounded. The girl, who has not been identified because of her age, was still in the house. Mr. Hamlin said the girl's 38-year-old mother was also arrested for improper storage of a firearm.

British girl found raped and killed in France

RENNES, France (R) — A 13-year-old British girl has been found raped and smothered near the Abbey of Mont Saint-Michel in northwestern France, police said Friday. The body of the girl, whose name was not disclosed, was found in the room of a youth hostel in which she was staying in the Brittany village of Pléine-Fougères. An investigation is underway. Police gave no further information.

Robbers try explosives on cash machines

JOHANNESBURG (R) — Robbers blasted two automatic bank teller machines with explosives but were unable to make them give up their cash, South African police said Friday. They used commercial explosives to try to blow up two machines in Johannesburg overnight, Sergeant Mark Reynolds said. Police were searching for three suspects. "People have tried many methods to get into the machines, but I certainly can't recall this in the Johannesburg area before," Sgt. Reynolds said, adding that no one was injured and no money was stolen.

U.S. town strung out on 1,000 harps

TACOMA, Washington (AFP) — More than 1,000 harpists from 40 countries descend on this west coast port city for the July 21-28 6th World Harp Congress Music Festival, a triennial hinge of hard competition, performance and education.

Top professionals, aficionados of the harp in jazz, Latin beat and opera, and strung-out novices as young as eight years old will be trundling their 40-kilogram instruments to 39 concerts over the eight-day programme.

Renowned American harpist Nancy Allen will open the festival Sunday, playing works by Marcel Tournier, J.S. Bach, and Claude Debussy. Allen, the most widely recorded harpist in the United States, will then be joined by her sister Barbara Allen to perform compositions for two harps by Cesar Franck and three others.

A July 23 "Salute to Jerusalem" celebrating that city's 3,000th anniversary will feature Israeli harpists premiering original works by Israeli composers. Backed by the northwest Sinfonietta Chamber Orchestra, harpist Adina Haroz will perform the world premiere of Haim Permon's Nigun II. Japanese harpists will also memorialise renowned harp composer Toru Takemitsu at a July 26 concert.

U.S. sailor Japanese

Local U.S. sailor Saturday was suspected of attempting a robbery of a Japanese woman, a police spokesman said.

Gregory Swanson, a 20-year-old crew member of the U.S. ship USS (LST-1166), was hauled into the U.S. military police station in Yokohama, Japan, on suspicion of a robbery of a Japanese woman.

Swanson was taken in a military van to the Yokohama Police Station in Japan. Broad-casting on NHK, two-page spread, the suspect was shown in a photograph being taken into the station.

He had been detained by U.S. Naval Security Forces in Sasebo following last week's alleged knife attack on the 20-year-old woman in a park in the port city.

He had also been questioned by Japanese police. The woman, identified as Yoko Taniguchi, was seriously injured after being slashed across the throat. Her bag, containing some \$500 and \$921 in cash,

26 injured in

MARSEILLE, France (AFP) — An explosion that destroyed a residential block in the centre of the French Mediterranean port of Marseille caused at least 26 minor injuries Saturday morning, firemen said.

Hours after the blast rescuers were still searching with the aid of dogs for a man who may have been trapped under the rubble.

A child which was previously thought to have been buried was alive and with his mother in the

British monarch

LONDON (R) — Queen Elizabeth II is to give her second son, Prince Andrew, a role in Britain's royal hierarchy following an announcement that he is to give up his career in the navy, royal watchers predicted Friday.

"My understanding is that he is going to be called on a great deal more by the queen," said Harold Brooks-Baker, publishing director of Burke's Peerage, the authoritative guide to Britain's aristocracy.

The Ministry of Defence said earlier that the prince would leave his post as a senior helicopter pilot in October for a desk job in London. After doing that job for 2-1/2 years, he would quit the navy.

British newspapers speculated that Prince Andrew, 36, the queen's second son, had decided against a new career in sea in part because he wanted to see his two daughters, Princess Eugenie, 6, regularly. The children live with their mother, the prince's ex-wife Sarah — the couple divorced earlier last month.

11-year-old girl
arrested in
shotgun murder



A Russian soldier stands on an ammunition box while observing an area near his unit's camp just outside the southern Chechen town of Shali. (Reuter photo)

Russian Air Force pound southern Chechenya — rebels

MOSCOW (AFP) — Russian warplanes carried out heavy air raids on the mountainous Shatoi and Itum-Kale districts of southern Chechenya Saturday, killing some 15 people and wounding up to 45, a Chechen rebel spokesman told Echo Moscow radio.

Spokesman Movladi Udugov said warplanes dropped bombs and fired rockets in the region for the fourth day running, while further north Russian troops had sealed off villages in the Shali district.

Minor clashes meanwhile took place in the Vedeno district in southeast Chechenya, he said.

Russian officials said six federal troops had died in war-torn Chechenya since early Friday.

Five were killed and one was seriously hurt when their tank hit a mine near Bachy-Yurt in the southeast Chechenya, the press service for Russian forces serving in the north Caucasus republic said.

In the capital Grozny, an officer was killed and five soldiers were injured when their vehicle was attacked.

Early Saturday gunmen killed two bodyguards in Grozny, in an attack aimed at a district leader, ITAR-TASS news agency reported.

Sharip Alikhadzhiyev, head of the Shali district administration, was unhurt in the incident but two of his bodyguards were killed and one of the assailants was wounded, a senior security official in the pro-Moscow Chechen government told ITAR-TASS.

Interfax reported that Mr. Alikhadzhiyev was out at



Two Russian soldiers load a multiple grenade launcher just outside the southern Chechen town of Shali. Despite efforts to salvage a ceasefire heavy fighting continued in the south of the region against separatist guerrillas (Reuter photo)

the time. Russian Tsakayev, secretary of the Grozny government's Security Council, linked the attack to a threat from Chechen rebel leader Zelimkhan Yandarbiyev in May to assassinate local Chechen officials.

Meanwhile, there was still no news of the whereabouts of Lyudmila Radmushkina, head of the Lenin District Administration in Grozny, who was kidnapped on July 7, Mr. Tsakayev said.

The kidnappers had demanded a ransom of \$500,000 and the pro-Moscow Chechen government had agreed to pay it, but the kidnappers then avoided further contacts, he told ITAR-TASS.

The situation in Grozny has been very tense for

more than a week since the Russian army and air force started bombarding villages in southern Chechenya, killing combatants and civilians indiscriminately, in a new offensive against the separatist rebels.

The bombardments shattered a fragile six-week ceasefire in the 19-month war, which has already claimed an estimated 40,000 lives, mostly civilians.

Amid reports of differences within the rebel ranks over how to respond to the Russian push, Salmar Raduyev, a hardline Chechen rebel field commander who had earlier been reported killed, dramatically reappeared Thursday vowing to "fight until the end."

He rejected negotiations

with Moscow and promised a large-scale rebel response. Mr. Udugov told Echo Moscow Saturday he rejected Commander Raduyev's claim that Dzhokhar Dudayev, who spearheaded the Chechen resistance, was still alive.

Russia and the Chechens had both said Dudayev was killed in Chechenya on April 21. The Russians said he died in an attack with air-to-surface missiles that homed in on his satellite telephone.

Mr. Udugov said he had "testimony from (rebel field commander) Shamil Basayev, who personally attended the funeral of Dudayev, from his wife and cousin, who was with him when he died — I have no reason to disbelieve them."

U.S. sailor accused of knifing Japanese woman arrested

TOKYO (AFP) — Local police in western Japan arrested a U.S. sailor Saturday on suspicion of attempted murder and robbery of a Japanese woman, a police spokesman said.

Terrence Swanson, a 20-year-old crew member of the McCusky, a frigate based in the Japanese port of Yokosuka, was handed over by the U.S. military under new bilateral criminal arrangements, he said.

Swanson was taken in a U.S. military van to the Sasebo Police Station in Nagasaki amid eight security. Japan Broadcasting Corp. (NHK) footage showed the suspect was guarded by metal shields while being taken into the building.

He had been detained by U.S. Naval Security Forces in Sasebo following last Tuesday's alleged knife attack on the 20-year-old woman at a park in the port city. He had also been questioned by Japanese police.

The woman, identified as Kaori Tanigawa, was seriously injured after being slashed across the throat. Her bag, containing some 10,000 yen (\$92) in cash,

was also snatched.

Masanori Tanigawa, the head of the Sasebo Police Station, told Jiji Press that the woman was still hospitalized and unable to see any visitors.

"We sought the handover of the suspect to carry out (an) appropriate investigation, particularly because of the cruelty and the gravity of the crime," the agency quoted Mr. Tanigawa as saying.

He said the eight security measures were "to protect the human rights of the suspect."

The handover of Swanson to Japanese authorities was the first since the United States agreed last October to turn over military suspects in local criminal cases before they are formally charged.

Prime Minister Ryutaro Hashimoto told reporters, "We appreciate the prompt action taken by the U.S. military in line with the revised accord," and added: "We want the U.S. military to tighten its discipline."

Previously, U.S. military members suspected of committing crimes in Japan were not taken into Japanese police custody until they were formally charged.

But the practice came under fire following the rape of a 12-year-old girl by three American servicemen in the southern Japan island of Okinawa in September.

Even though Japanese police had warrants to arrest the three men in the Okinawa case, the suspects were not handed over until they were indicted, triggering an unprecedented wave of protests on the island.

The McCusky, the frigate that Swanson had been stationed on since November 1994, is based in Yokosuka, south of Tokyo, but was making a call at the port of Sasebo at the time of the assault.

Sasebo Mayor Akira Mitsutake said in a statement that the latest case had "undermined confidence between Japan and the United States, and created a sense of grave insecurity among citizens."

"We want the governments of the two countries to take measures to prevent recurrence of a similar incident, including steps to tighten discipline of U.S. troops," he said.

Japan poisoning strikes teachers, families

SAKAI, Japan (R) — A food poisoning epidemic that has made more than 6,000 primary schoolchildren ill took an increasing toll on their teachers and family members Saturday.

Health authorities said nearly 150 teachers and family members had come down in the past few days with what appeared to be second infections from the O-157 colonic bacterium outbreak.

A spokesman for a National Task Force sent to the area to control the epidemic told reporters a total of 6,083 victims had needed hospital treatment since the outbreak on July 11.

Nearly 600 remained in hospital with three of them, all girls, on life support systems in danger of dying.

The spokesman said the teachers and family members — there was no breakdown on the numbers — did not appear to have picked up the infection from the school lunches that set off the outbreak.

Instead they had come down with the illness possibly through contact with victims who already had the disease.

The bacteria cause severe diarrhoea, vomiting and fever and health authorities are spraying classrooms and shutting swimming pools in this town of nearly one million people to stop secondary infections.

However, the doctors and scientists sent to Sakai were no closer to determining exactly what was the carrier of the bacteria.

They were carrying out tests on 12 meals served to schools since the beginning of July but the results so far were inconclusive.

In the past 10 days eel sushi, roast pork and chicken have been blamed. They were all part of meals prepared at central locations and transported to the 92 primary schools in the Sakai area.

Stocks of soap and disinfectant alcohol were running out in Sakai because of panic buying by parents trying to ensure their children did not pick up the disease.

Dr. Kengo Nishimaki, part of the National Task Force, told reporters his greatest fear was that the toll of seriously ill patients could start to rise.

"The toll of very serious patients can go up at any moment," he said. He said the main danger was from falling blood pressure and dehydration.

Nishimaki said researchers were repeating all their tests on the school lunches in a bid to trace the carrier.

Sri Lankan battle rages; toll exceeds 1,000

COLOMBO (R) — Sri Lankan forces fought a fierce battle with Tamil guerrillas, involving ground troops, air force and the navy, for the third day Saturday over a strategic army camp.

Both sides have claimed heavy casualties amounting to about a thousand killed. Army officials said government reinforcements beheading to relieve the north-eastern Mullaitivu Camp had killed more than 300 guerrillas of the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) in one of the bloodiest battles of the 13-year-old separatist war.

The LTTE claimed more than 800 troops and 120 Tiger rebels were killed in the battle in Mullaitivu district following a pre-dawn rebel attack on the key army camp Thursday.

Just south of Mullaitivu, 280 kilometres from Colombo, LTTE rebels shot down an army helicopter, police in the neighbouring naval base city of Trincomalee said.

"The Tigers crippled an army helicopter in Pund-

dei village," a police officer told Reuters. He gave no further details.

An LTTE statement said the guerrillas had taken complete control of the Mullaitivu Camp. The army has denied the claim.

"After two days of fierce battles, the LTTE fighter units have overrun the military complex at Mullaitivu and brought the camp area under their control last night," a Tiger statement faxed to an international news agency from London said.

"So far 800 bodies of soldiers have been recovered from the ruins of the battle and the casualty figure might rise as more troops are being killed from small pockets of resistance outside the camp perimeter," it said.

Army officials in Trincomalee said troops had killed more than 300 Tiger rebels in Alampil, on the fringes of Mullaitivu. They said the army was trying to land reinforcements there.

An LTTE statement earlier said the troops had suf-

fered heavy casualties at Alampil. "The reinforcement troops" airlifted by helicopters at Alampil, 10 kilometres from Mullaitivu, have suffered severe casualties and face virtual annihilation by the LTTE forces," it said.

The rebel mouthpiece voice of Tigers radio Saturday said the battle between government reinforcements and the rebels had set off an exodus of residents from neighbouring towns which had come under heavy shelling.

Guerrillas accused government troops of shelling surrounding villages. There was no official comment on the claim.

"The Sri Lankan soldiers at the Elephant Pass army camp, angry at the fall of their Mullaitivu, took their revenge by firing artillery shells at several Tamil villages in Killinochchi district," a second LTTE statement said.

The rebels said the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) had moved its offices in the Killinochchi town some 30 kilometres from Mullaitivu to a safer area following continued bombardment since Thursday.

The guerrillas had agreed to hand over the bodies of the soldiers to the ICRC.

Army spokesman Sarath Munasinghe told a news conference Friday that troops were holding on to the camp.

"We do not know our casualties. We can tell only when reinforcements reach," Mr. Munasinghe said.

The bulk of the more than 1,000 troops manning Mullaitivu were still there, he said. The Tigers had not overrun the camp.

A Tiger statement said more than 1,000 fighters were involved in the assault. The latest attacks come a week before the 13th anniversary of islandwide anti-Tamil riots that began the ethnic conflict in which the government says more than 50,000 people have died.

26 injured in Marseille centre blast

MARSEILLE, France (AFP) — An explosion that destroyed a residential block in the centre of the French Mediterranean port of Marseille caused at least 26 minor injuries Saturday morning, firemen said.

Hours after the blast rescuers were still searching with the aid of dogs for a man who may have been trapped under the rubble.

A child which was previously thought to also have been buried was alive and with his mother in the

southern town of Toulon, rescuers said.

A team of 120 firefighters freed residents from the building by ladder because the stairs were too damaged to use. All victims were hospitalised with injuries caused by the force of the explosion and by flying glass.

Emergency services were hampered by the risk that the badly damaged seven-storey building could collapse.

The cause of the blast,

which happened in Place Des Marseillaises near St. Charles Station just after 9:15 a.m. (0715 GMT), is not yet known, but gas was suspected.

"Immediately after the explosion, I smelled a strong odour of gas," said a resident, still in shock from suddenly seeing her walls crumble.

The explosion was heard over a large part of the city and shattered windows of nearby buildings and cars.

British monarch may give Andrew key role

LONDON (R) — Queen Elizabeth II is to give her second son, Prince Andrew, a key role in Britain's royal hierarchy following an announcement that he is to give up his career in the navy, royal watchers predicted Friday.

"My understanding is that he is going to be called on a great deal more by the queen," said Harold Brooks-Baker, publishing director of Burke's Peerage, the authoritative guide to Britain's aristocracy.

The Ministry of Defence said earlier that the prince would leave his post as a senior helicopter pilot in October for a desk job in London. After doing that job for 2-1/2 years, he would quit the navy.

British newspapers speculated that Prince Andrew, 36, the queen's second son, had decided against a new posting at sea in part because he wanted to see his two daughters, Princess Beatrice, 7, and Princess Eugenie, 6, regularly.

The children live with their mother, the prince's ex-wife Sarah — the couple divorced earlier last month

— but see their father frequently when he is not at sea.

But the papers said the queen had discussed the prince's future with him following the announcement that he is to give up his career in the navy, royal watchers predicted Friday.

"It is understood that he will... play a more central role in the official life of the royal family, filling the void created by the departures of the Princess of Wales and his ex-wife," the Times newspaper reported.

Mr. Brooks-Baker said following recent marital problems, there were "very few people the monarch can depend on" to carry out such functions as meeting heads of state, organising ambassadorial receptions and going on state visits.

"He has the right sort of placid personality for the type of jobs that are dealt out," he added.

A Buckingham Palace spokesman said Prince Andrew was considering a number of options for his future after leaving the navy, which he joined in

1979.

The prince earned his "wings" as a helicopter pilot in 1981, and was on the carrier Invincible during the Falklands War the following year, flying a Sea King helicopter on anti-submarine and transport duties.

He was awarded a campaign medal for his role in the war, in which a British task force drove invading Argentine forces from the South Atlantic islands.

He married Sarah Fergusson in a blaze of pageantry in 1986. On the morning of his wedding his mother created him Duke of York, a title traditionally held by the second son of a monarch, while his new wife became a duchess.

After his marriage, Prince Andrew spent long periods at sea in his job as naval helicopter pilot, leaving his jet-setting wife to suffer the barbs of the media alone.

The couple separated in 1992. The prince's ex-wife is currently on holiday on the French Riviera with Princess Diana, whose divorce will be finalised next month.

NASA prepares to return to the red planet

CAPE CANAVERAL, Florida (R) — Twenty years after sending probes to Mars, NASA is preparing a return to the red planet, but if life exists there do not expect to see malevolent, tentacle aliens like those depicted in the smash hit movie Independence Day.

The first of two Viking probes touched down 20 years ago Saturday but failed to conclusively answer if life existed on Mars. But this week, as the U.S. space agency was commemorating the anniversary, it was preparing to dispatch a small armada of spacecraft to learn more about the planet and perhaps shed some light on the question of life.

Earthlings, however, should not be overly concerned about the prospect of an attack by Martians.

"When we talk about life we're not even talking about lizards, salamanders or worms," said Wayne Lee, mission planner for Mars operations

at NASA's Jet Propulsion Laboratory in Pasadena, California. "We'd probably be talking about simple bacteria and microbes, if it existed at all."

Life would face a struggle on the surface of Mars, where surface temperatures average -81 degrees F (-63 degrees C) and liquid water would boil away in the planet's low air pressure.

Things may have been different about a billion years ago, as pictures have revealed channels cut into the planet's surface by torrents of running water. What happened to that water remains a mystery.

NASA's exploration of Mars suffered a devastating blow in 1993 when the \$1 billion Mars Observer, the first spacecraft sent to Mars since the 1976 Vikings, was lost days before it was due to arrive at the planet.

That disaster and budget cutbacks led NASA to take a different tack to Mars exploration this

time. "We have since realised that it is not a good strategy to put all our eggs in one basket. Instead, we can use the same amount of money to fly more missions, but smaller and at a cheaper cost, and if one of them goes down the tubes it does not destroy the entire programme," Mr. Lee said.

Three years after NASA's Mars programme seemed lost in space, two new smaller spacecraft are being readied for the journey to the red planet.

Mars global surveyor, scheduled to blast off from Cape Canaveral in November, will carry identical copies of five of the seven scientific instruments on Mars Observer. From 367 kilometres up it will be able to photograph objects on the Martian surface as small as a compact car.

Mars Pathfinder, consisting of a lander and a mini-rover, will follow in December. If all goes well, the spacecraft will

enter Mars' atmosphere at 17,000 mph (27,000 kmh) next July. Parachutes will slow it to about 30 mph (50 kmh) and giant air bags will cushion its landing on an ancient flood plain.

The sides of the pyramid-shaped lander will then open like flower petals, revealing a weather station and freeing a remote-controlled Rover to explore the surrounding area.

The Rover, about the size of a laser printer, will roam from its base beaming back video and determining the composition of rocks with an "electronic tongue."

The two spacecraft each cost about \$150 million, plus \$65 million for each of the Delta 2 rockets that will send them on their way. By comparison, the two Viking spacecraft would have a combined price tag of \$2.5 billion in 1996 dollars.

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The computers that think they are time travellers

By Charles Arthur

IN FOUR years' time, many computers may take a spectacular leap back in time to 1900 — because their internal clocks calculate that is the year which follows 1999.

The effects could be dramatic, and are so far-reaching that they were debated in parliament. For example, in one of the "nightmare scenarios" people born in 1965 might receive the startling news that though they are only 35 their pensions are available for collection.

The problem would arise if the computer system administering pensions for the Department of Social Security (DSS) contains the programming flaw known as the "Millennium Bug". This common error is caused when data about the year is contracted to a two-digit number.

In that case, the pensions system would calculate someone's age by subtracting their date of birth — recorded as "65" — from the present year, which would be "00", and deciding that the person must be 65 years old.

Government departments were unable to give concrete estimates of how much the changes to the programmes which make such calculations will cost, or when they would be complete.

The DSS's computer branch, the IT Systems Agency, admitted that it does not yet know what the full impact will be on the day after Dec. 31, 1999. It does know, however, that many of its thousands of computer systems will be affected.

"We aim to make sure that nobody will be affected," a spokeswoman said. "We are sure that the changes can be made within the normal

maintenance and upgrade routines. There is no risk that key benefits systems will fail."

Government departments generally are rapidly running out of time to find and fix the hidden problems in the thousands of computer systems which are date-dependent. The problem is worst on large mainframe systems — such as those used to process benefits and tax payments — but also occurs on personal computers (PCs).

The problem is not limited to government: banks and insurance companies also face big problems. But according to Jacky Olivier, of the computing services company Hoskyns, many managers are not thinking carefully enough about the possible effects. Some, she adds, are "in denial" about the possible effects. "It's an issue for everybody. The only question is, how big is the mountain that they have to climb. For some companies, it could be life-threatening," she said.

Making the change is not simply a matter of resetting the computer's internal clock to 1900 and adding 100 to any subtraction. This could result in benefits being offered on a Sunday, because some payments are triggered by a particular day of the week — and Jan. 1, 1900 was a Monday, whereas Jan. 1, 2000 will be a Saturday.

Ms. Olivier provides consultancy and advice to organisations planning for the programming changes. "A big organisation, such as a bank, will have 10,000 different programmes containing date information which must be checked," she said.

"That's probably three days' work per programme. That's a total of 30,000 work-days — or 115 work-



years. The cost of doing that is in the millions. The worst thing is that there's no business benefit from doing it, except that you won't go bust."

The Inland Revenue say that the cost of making the changes will be subsumed into its computing budget. With so many interlocking computer systems — from

local government, banks and departments — requiring change, the possibilities for error are huge. The DSS said that it is concerned, for example,

about data arriving from local government about housing benefit. "Any change has to be done in conjunction with the rest of government and associated

organisations," a spokesman said. However, the DSS has been working on the problem only since last year, and could not provide any

information about how many people were concerned with the project.

The Independent

Cambodian tattoos protect only so far

By Leo Dobbs
Reuter

PHNOM PENH — Lieutenant General Nhek Bun Chhay, like countless Cambodian fighting men over the centuries, wears a blanket of tattoos across his chest and a string of talismans and boar tusks around his neck.

"It is a Cambodian belief to have this protection against bullets," the armed forces deputy chief of staff told Reuters, before claiming: "Many times I have been shot at but never hit."

While the stocky general and Cambodia's tattoo masters swear by the power of the ancient designs, maimed soldiers in hospitals around the country seem to tell another story about the efficacy of the pictorial panaceas and magic medallions they sport.

"Before I believed in it very much, but I don't rely on it after I lost my right forearm in a mine blast," said Hem Saron, 29, at Phnom Penh's Preah Ket Mealea military hospital, adding that the chest tattoos had protected him for eight years.

"The magic's gone from my body. For the first one or two years it was strong, then it became less and less and now it's gone," added the intelligence agent who lost his limb while on a mission against Khmer Rouge guerrillas last January.

Keo Vibol, a tattoo master whose body is a blue-black blur of ink animals, ancient script, ornate designs and human figures, acknowledges the magic can fail but maintains this is because the wearer has not followed the instructions of his kru (teacher).

"When the person with the tattoo does something wrong and forgets what their teacher said, something will happen to him," said the former

monk turned soldier, who has pricked protective images on to the skins of thousands of soldiers and civilians.

General Nhek Bun Chhay, who has been wearing tattoos for more than 15 years, agreed, saying: "Some men who have this are protected, some not — you have to do some good deeds."

Keo Vibol takes great care in the preparation and execution of the tattoos after his clients have

chosen from hundreds of designs, some centuries old, that he has been carrying for years in tattered notebooks and on scraps of paper.

"I use a special needle and make a special (Buddhist) sermon to the needle so when it pierces the skin it can't bleed or hurt," the 43-year-old army major said, before practising his art on a grim-faced colleague as incense burned on a nearby altar.

The rusty-looking needle, more like a dart that had been fitted onto the end of an umbrella spoke, was charged with black ink made from animal bile. Keo Vibol kept up a continuous chant as he jabbed the needle in and out of the chest flesh.

He says his own tattoos have protected him from mines and bullets for the past two decades, while his wife Sang Savin swears to the properties of the simple but distinctive

tattoos that cross the top of her chest and run down one calf and a forearm.

Sang Savin firmly believes in their power and recalls an incident from when she had lived at a guerrilla camp during the 1980s civil war. "At one time I followed my husband and the person without tattoos who kept behind me stepped on a mine. But I was all right and so was my husband."

Siv Toun, deputy head

of Phnom Penh University's History Department, said Chinese visitors to Cambodia wrote in the 1st century A.D. that the locals went around naked "and one could clearly see tattoos on the skin".

He said this period, known as the Funan era, was one of hand-to-hand combat between protagonists armed with axes, spears and swords and the tattoos were "to protect against the weapons".

Son Soubert, a senior

parliamentarian and French-educated intellectual, said the use of tattoos to ward off evil and misfortune probably came to Cambodia centuries ago with Indian settlers who practised Vedic (ancient Hindu) rituals.

"The tattoo's supposed to have some magic...It's a kind of mantra (Vedic hymn) and yantra. The design is called yantra and the text is called mantra," added the MP. He said neighbouring

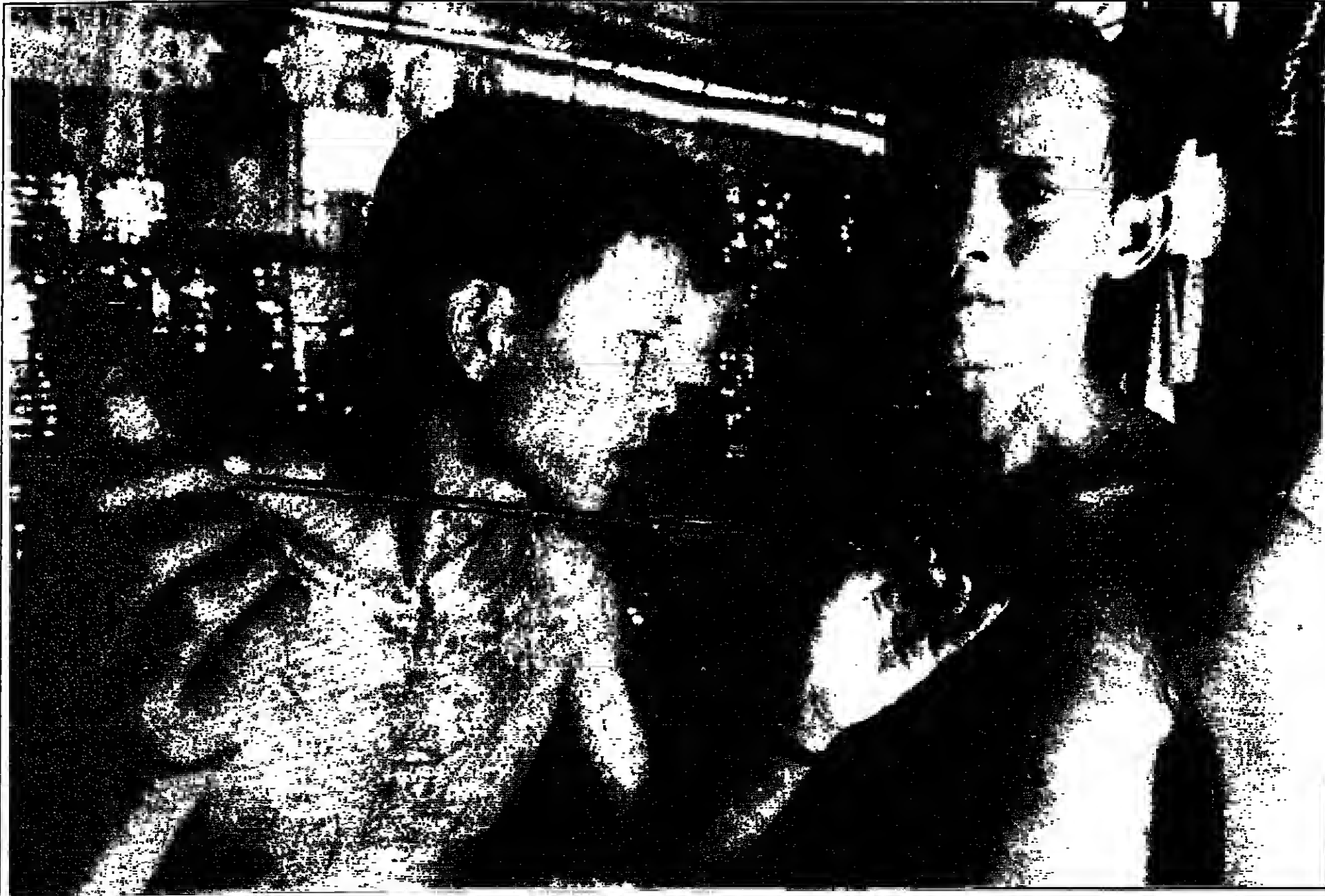
Thais believed tattoos bearing the Khmer script were more powerful and "they still use the Khmer script".

Many soldiers, like Nhek Bun Chhay and Keo Vibol, also believe in the power of animal teeth, talismans and Buddha images, which are placed in the mouth for protection during the heat of battle.

But cynics relate the tale of 22-year-old Singaporean disc jockey Chiang Hock Guan who bought a talisman for \$1,500 from a Cambodian last year and then insisted on testing its magic powers — he died later that day from a bullet wound in the stomach.

Defence Secretary of State Ek Sereyvatth said not everyone wore tattoos and talismans as protective devices but rather as lures, explaining: "Some playboys have this to attract women."

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Keo Vibol, a former monk turned soldier and tattoo master, works on a soldier's tattoo at a military base near Phnom Penh (Reuter photo)

World Bank boosts lending to North Africa, Mideast

WASHINGTON (AFP) — The World Bank accorded loans worth \$1.655 billion to countries in North Africa and the Middle East in fiscal 1996, up from \$999 million the previous year, Bank Vice President Kemal Dervis said Friday. The bank's fiscal year 1996 ended June 30, during which 24 new projects in eight countries were supported.

Officials, who are optimistic about the pace of economic growth in the region, said they hope to be able to grant \$1.9 billion in loans in 1997.

Morocco, which received \$540 million, and Algeria, \$428 million, were the largest beneficiaries. "Algeria has made tremendous efforts for two or three years," Mr. Dervis said. "We are very impressed and happy but at the same time, there is a very high unemployment level and they have to create a modern private sector," he added.

The Palestinian National Authority was granted loans worth \$60 million in fiscal 1996 to help finance two reconstruction and infrastructure projects.

Loans for social development in such sectors as education and health amounted to \$446.5 million while those designed to strengthen banking and finance operations came to \$408.7 million.

In addition to Algeria, Morocco and the Palestinian National Authority, the bank approved loans to the following: Egypt, \$172 million; Jordan, \$120 million; Lebanon, \$70 million; Tunisia, \$98.7 million; and Yemen, \$166.3 million.

The amount of debt rescheduled since 1994 is roughly half of Algeria's total foreign debt estimated at the end of 1995 at \$32 billion, much of it incurred a decade ago when crude oil prices crashed and the country borrowed heavily to keep its centralized economy going and sustain public sector industries.

Four years of political violence and economic sabotage by Islamist rebels bent on ousting the secular government took their toll on the economy. Algeria saw the first sign of an economic turnaround last year when agriculture led to growth of 4.1 per cent, reversing 10 years of economic decline.

The government says that despite positive indicators for the first half of 1996, when gross domestic product (GDP) grew at an annual rate of five per cent, it is worried by the poor performance of industry, into which the state poured billions of petrodollars during the oil boom years in a massive industrialisation drive.

The industrial sector remains an albatross which the government says has held back growth in the non-hydrocarbons sector and is pulling the economy down.

Under its economic reform programme, the North African state is trying to lessen dependence on crude oil exports — oil and gas sales account for more than 95 per cent of exports. It has targeted growth of 5.5 per cent in the non-hydrocarbons sector by the end of the century.

The violence has crippled 10 per cent of Algerian industry and industrial production, excluding oil and gas, fell 2.1 per cent in the first quarter of this year compared with the same period in 1995.

Unsold production, high costs of debt servicing, unpaid salaries and the impact of the dinar's devaluation in 1993 has raised the sector's debt to 128 billion dinars (\$2.4 billion) at the end of the first three months of 1996 compared with 100 billion in the same period last year.

Sabotage by Muslim rebels, who often blow up gas pipelines, have cost Algeria \$2 billion in losses since the outlawed Islamic Salvation Front (FIS) began

a violent struggle for power in 1992. Faced with a poor performing and indebted public sector gnawing at state funds and a population growing at a rate of 2.9 per cent — half the population of 28 million under the age of 20 and the majority is unemployed — the government embarked on an economic reform programme.

Under the plan, supported by the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF), Algeria moved to dismantle its state-controlled economy, liberalise trade and encourage private sector investment into infrastructure projects previously the domain of state enterprises.

It plans to privatise small and medium-sized enterprises and transform larger state concerns into holding companies with fixed performance targets as a prelude to future sell-offs.

In recent months it has levied higher income taxes on the wealthy and raised taxes on beer, cigarettes and petrol to raise funds for housing projects and new jobs. The private sector has been invited to participate in road-construction projects and the first private bank has started operations.

Natural gas exports from Algeria are expected to double over the next three years, resulting in additional earnings of \$3 billion to end 1998, the end of the rescheduling period when the debt servicing ratio as a percentage of exports will rise again.

LEO: (July 22 to August 21) This is a good day today to make your home more charming and tidy, however, take it easy in the evening. Labour on your budget and determine if there are any areas which you can make improvement in the days ahead.

VIRGO: (August 22 to September 22) This is a fine day today to improve your appearance and take any health treatments which you will need. Forget a pleasure which is too costly and could put you in a financial bind for the days ahead.

LIBRA: (September 23 to October 22) Get into whatever private aims most motivate you during the daytime today, and relieve tensions at home between your loved ones in the evening so that you will be at your best when an opportunity presents itself.

SCORPIO: (October 23 to November 21) Your close friends have good ideas for entertainment today, so go along with them. Steer clear of a con artist this evening who is only out for your financial status and has no interest on your success.

SAGITTARIUS: (November 22 to December 21) Get into the outside world today and improve relationships with regular contacts. However, be more economical this evening and keep track where every penny of your hard earned money end up or you can find yourself in difficulty.

CAPRICORN: (December 22 to Jan. 20) Take a little trip today to accumulate the information which is important to you in the morning. However, don't push personal aims in the evening or you could discover that you are two steps back instead of forward.

AQUARIUS: (January 21 to February 19) If you are more thoughtful of your mate today, this can be a most pleasant day for you. Solve a personal difficulty tonight which has been present for some time and you will gain the success which you desire.

PISCES: (February 20 to March 20) Show outside contacts today that you want to be more cooperative in the days ahead and gain goodwill. Make this an enjoyable for your loved ones and plan some fun activities for them which will make everyone happy.

Birthstone of July: Ruby — Tiger's Eye.

By Thomas S. Pierson, Astrologer, Carroll Righer Foundation

ARIES: (March 21 to April 19) Get your home looking more charming during the daytime today, however, be careful in the outside world later this evening. Something unexpected lurks in the background which will be quite exciting if you handle it correctly.

TAURUS: (April 20 to May 21) Get at the recreations you most enjoy during the daytime today, however, new contacts might disappoint you so be prepared for a let down and handle it in stride. Later tonight you can spend some time with your loved ones.

GEMINI: (May 22 to June 21) If you are most charming at home, you can have more harmony there today and in the days ahead. Don't annoy your mate this evening or you will discover how disagreeable this person can be if he or she is crossed.

MOON CHILDREN: (June 22 to July 21) A message you get can be most delightful for you during the daytime today. Later tonight steer clear of self-seeking people who are only interested in their own pleasures and would not be interested in any of your own ideas.

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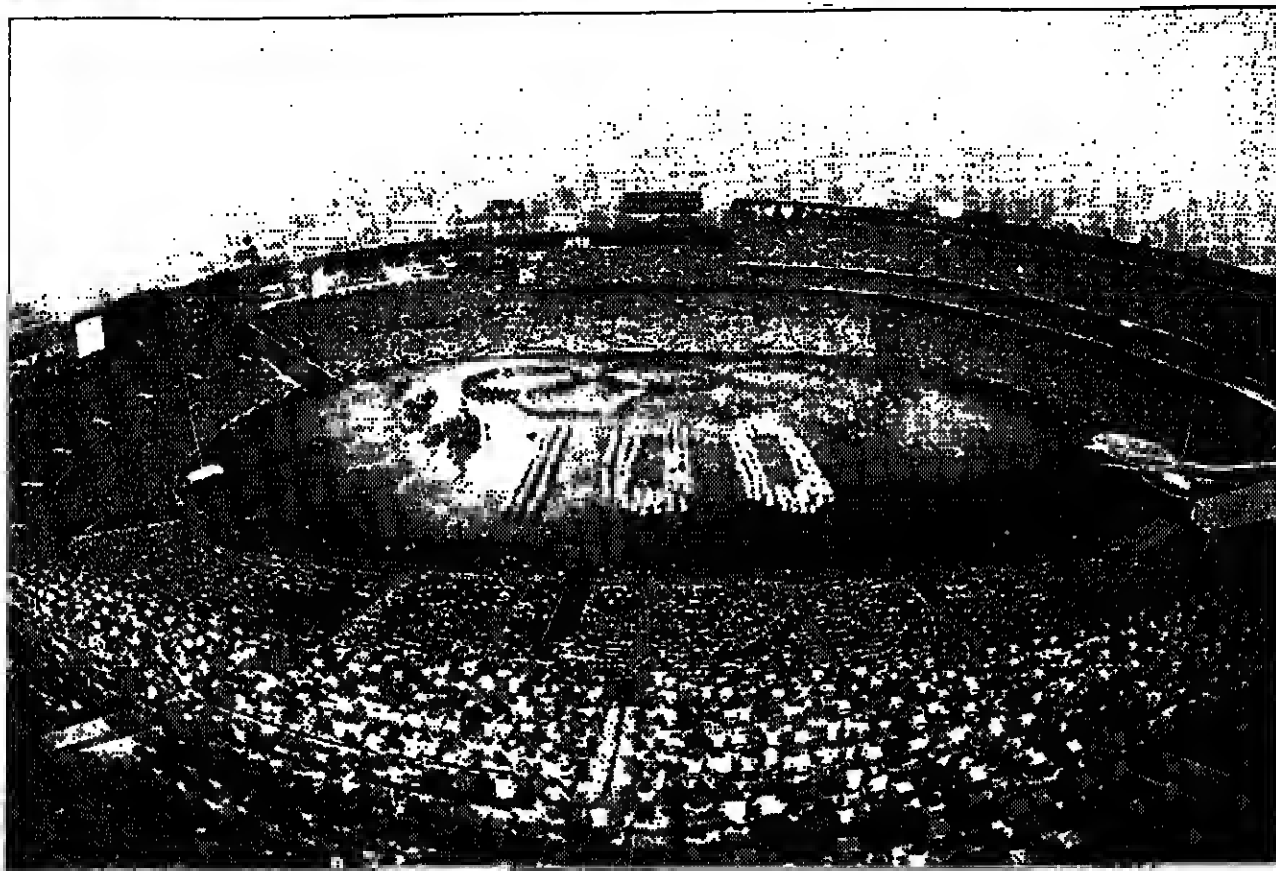
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General view of Atlanta's Olympic Stadium with performers forming the Olympic rings and the number 100 to signify the Centennial of the Summer Olympics. July 19 during the opening ceremonies. One hundred and ninety seven countries are participating in the XXVI Summer Games (Reuters photo)



U.S. gold medal winning swimmer Janet Evans (right) receives the Olympic flame from U.S. bronze medal winning boxer Evander Holyfield and Greek 100m hurdler Paraskevi Patoulidou during the opening ceremonies of the Centennial Olympic Games (Reuters photo)

Atlanta begins 26th Olympic Games with spectacular show

ATLANTA (R) — Muhammad Ali braved debilitating illness to light the centenary Olympic flame on Friday and launch the biggest show in sporting history.

Shaking from the effects of Parkinson's syndrome, the man who won gold at the 1960 Rome Olympics and went on to become the most-crowned heavyweight took the Olympic torch from swimmer Janet Evans.

He stood for several moments, cheered by a crowd of 85,000, before lighting a taper that sped to the top of a tower to ignite the flame that will burn throughout the Games.

It was an emotional finale to a ceremony that mixed glitzy Americana with elements of classical Greek mythology to pay respect to the Mediterranean roots of the Games.

President Bill Clinton

officially opened the

Games, which have attract-

ed 10,000 athletes from a

record 197 countries for 17

days of top-level sport and

Southern hospitality.

A record global television audience of 3.5 billion watched as Palestinians appeared on the Olympic stage for the first time and Bosnians celebrated the end of their bloody war.

International Olympic Committee President Juan Antonio Samaranch hailed the peace in former Yugoslavia but said: "We still live in a world where human tragedies persist."

He called on countries locked in conflict to lay down their arms and observe a truce during the Games in the tradition of ancient Olympia.

Before Ali appeared the showstopper had been a giant temple of Zeus decorated with living silhouettes of Olympic athletes. It was poetry in motion, a giant Greek frieze springing magically to life.

On a hot, steamy night in Georgia, spectators cheered to celebrate a jamboree of American exuberance and classical ancient Greece.

For Atlanta Games mas-

termind Billy Payne, it was

a dream finally fulfilled. In a brash city where hyperbole reigns supreme, he hailed the Atlanta Games as "the greatest peacetime event in modern history".

The real estate lawyer won his city's confidence and then persuaded the giant corporations of the world outside to foot the \$1.7 billion bill for the privately-funded Games.

The stadium, was enveloped in American razzmatazz with marching bands, cheerleaders in a bizarre ballet of pickup trucks, Motown star Gladys Knight sang "Georgia on My Mind" to tumultuous applause.

U.S. Thunderbird jets roared over the stadium, fireworks erupted in the night sky and the crowd joined in with a giant Mexican wave.

The athletes poured onto the track but were soon snarled up as badly as the traffic in central Atlanta. They stopped to take photos and wave to friends in the

stands.

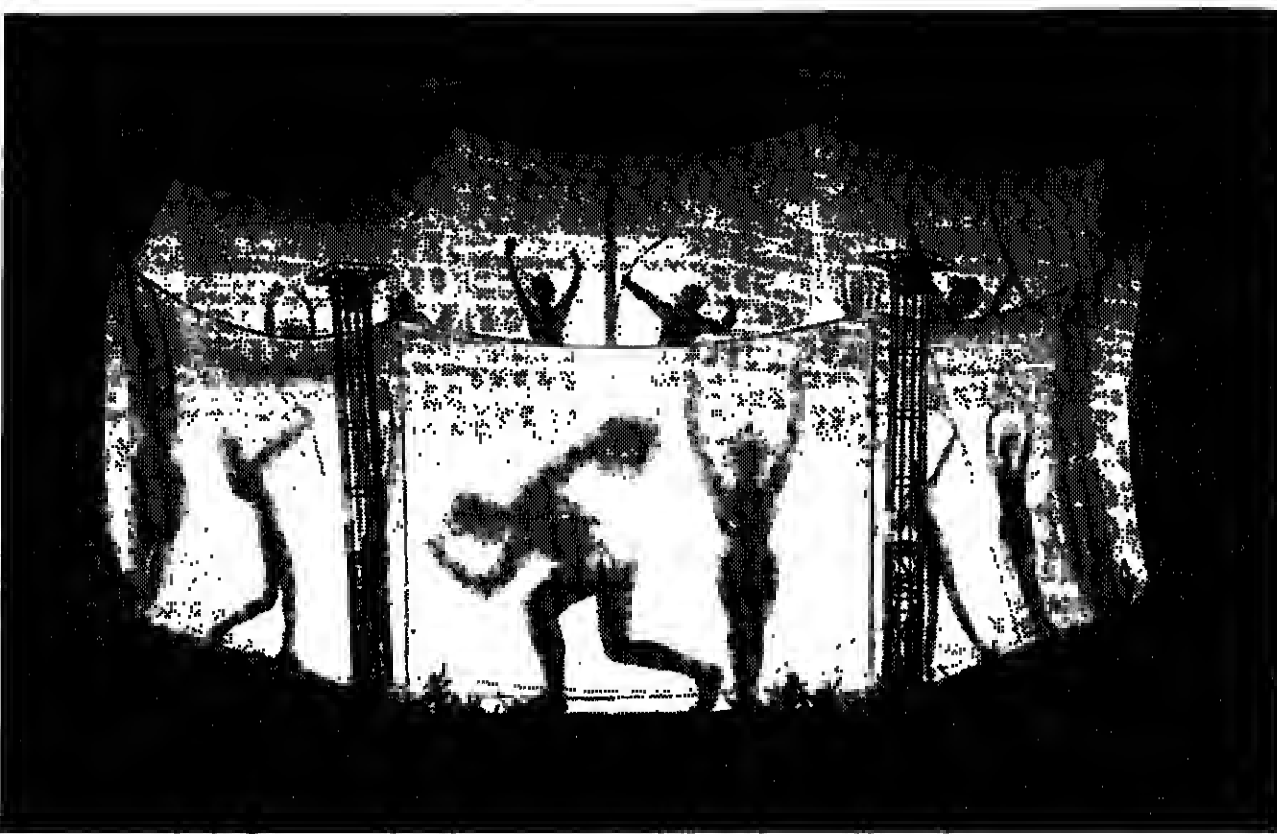
Despite the international outpouring of goodwill, the evening was tempered by tragedy as Americans remembered the 230 people killed on Wednesday night when a TWA jumbo jet crashed off New York.

The disaster put Clinton in reflective mood and he paid special tribute to 16 school-children who perished in the fireball.

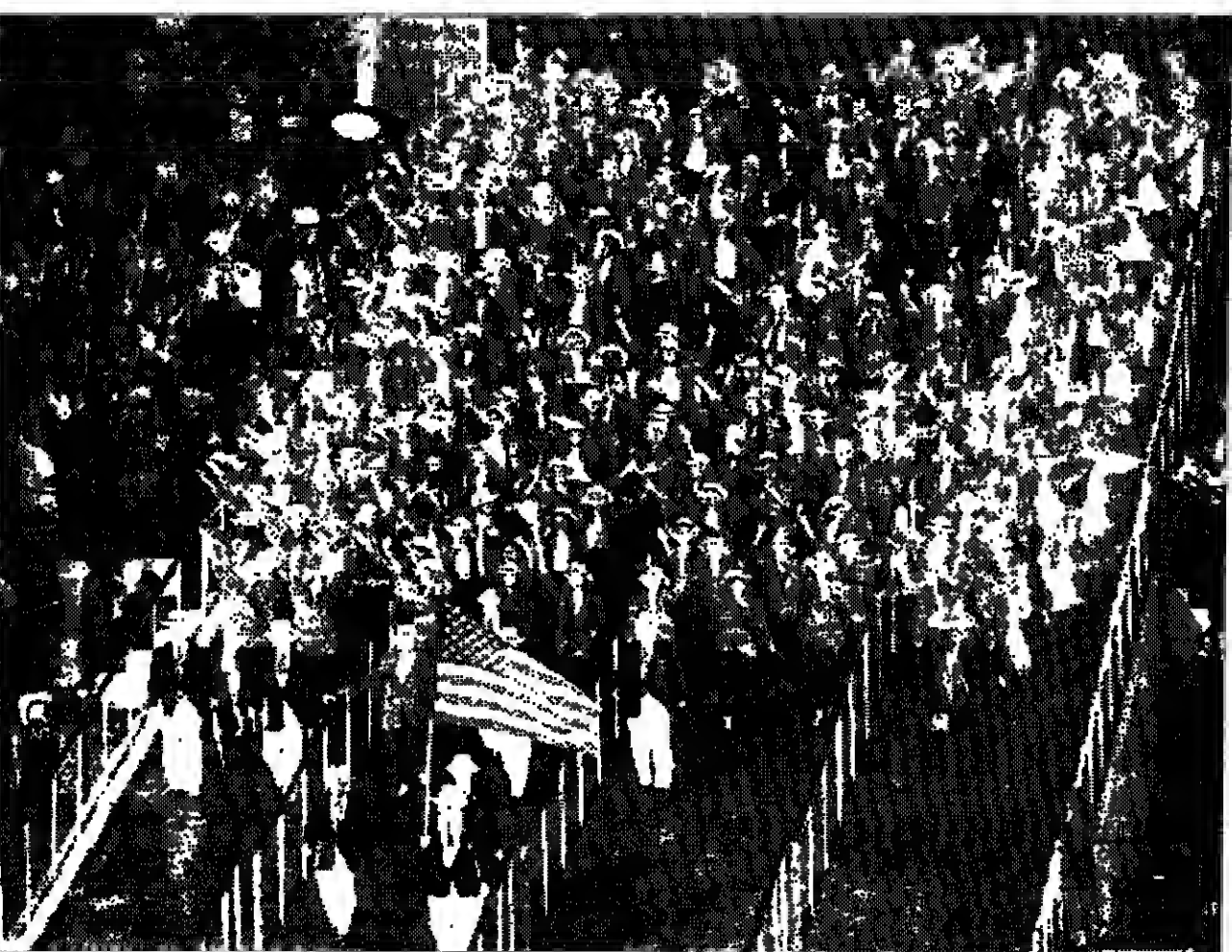
"Let us remember the dreams these children shared, the dream of making the most of their own lives," he told CBS Radio before opening the Games.

Security was tightened as 30,000 personnel — the largest peacetime force assembled in U.S. history — sought to justify the organisers' proud boast that one of America's most violent cities would become the safest place on earth.

Hollywood impresario Don Mischer's fervent wish for a rain-free night in the deep south came true and his slickly choreographed show ran like clockwork.



Back-lit dancers create silhouettes depicting the classical poses of Greek athletes as part of the opening ceremonies of the Centennial Olympic Games in Atlanta (Reuters photo)



Members of the United States' delegation, led by flag carrier Bruce Baumgartner, enter the Olympic Stadium during the opening ceremonies of the XXVI Centennial Olympic Games in Atlanta (Reuters photo)

Rich Olympic elite snub the village idiots

ATLANTA (AFP) — Dream Team III's snubbing of the Olympic village has led a host of elite no-shows at the overcrowded housing area, ending any illusion about meaningful social unity for the world's top sport figures.

Missing from the much-criticised official living quarters are Andre Agassi, Michael Johnson, Carl Lewis, Linford Christie and the entire British track delegation as well as the multi-millionaire United States basketball stars.

"The Olympic experience — what these words mean to people is different," Dream Team guard John Stockton said. "In my case, it has never meant going into the village and meeting everybody. It's standing on the medal platform and watching the stars and stripes go up."

"We have people that have special security considerations. We can't back down from that."

Like Michael Jordan and the original Dream Team in Barcelona, this group is staying in a nearby hotel, surrounded by private security guards.

It is also better preparation for winning gold to stay at a luxury hotel than in the village, where with 10,000 expected in the village and more than 11,000 living there, those who can afford to stay away are doing so in droves.

"Can you imagine all these NBA guys in the village?" Dream Team forward Grant Hill asked. "Can you imagine Michael Jordan in the village? No. We will be staying in a hotel."

"I don't want to be locked up in my room. I want to enjoy the entire Olympic experience. This is my first Olympics and there is no guarantee I will get back."

Scottie Pippen, back from the original Dream Team,

said players would like to relax with other Olympians, but they fear the risk of being locked in with 11,000 others who are drawn to them like moths to the brightest Olympic flame.

"If forced to stay in the village, I think we would," Pippen said. "It's a place we would like to stay and hang around with all the other athletes. But we're such highly recognised athletes that it's hard to walk in the village and enjoy our freedom."

Many of those living in the village are finding only freedom of misery.

"The bedrooms in the village are small," said Russian pole vaulter Igor Trandenkov, a 1992 silver medalist. "There is no television and the food was a lot better in Barcelona."

"I would rather be in Barcelona." But there are some who live in the village and love it, world tennis co-number one Monica Seles and swimmer Janet Evans among them.

"I just ate lunch by myself in the village," Evans said. "There were people all around me speaking different languages and I thought, 'this is really cool.'"

Seles, out two years after being stabbed in the back in 1993, said she has no security worries in the village.

"The security is unbelievable," Seles said. "I feel safe in the village and on the tennis courts."

Oldest living Olympian honoured

ATLANTA (R) — Leon Stukelj, 97, the world's oldest living Olympic champion, looked half his age as he trotted into the Atlanta Games arena during Friday's opening ceremony.

Slovenian Stukelj, winner of a gymnastics gold at the 1924 Paris Olympics, had a real spring in his step as he was given a rousing welcome by the crowd.

Smiling and waving, he took centre stage with fellow champions like swimmer Mark Spitz and long jumper Bob Beamon.

Eight times gold medallist Carl Lewis sprang forward to shake his hand and Romanian gymnast Nadia Comaneci gave him a big kiss.



Atlanta 1996

Olympic schedule for Sunday, July 21

BASEBALL

Cuba vs. South Korea

BASKETBALL

Women's

Brazil vs. Canada

Ukraine vs. Cuba

Japan vs. Russia

South Korea vs. Australia

Boxing

1st round

CYCLING

Women's road race, finals

EQUESTRIAN

Open three-day team dressage, 1st round

FENCING

Women's individual epee, 1st round to finals

Men's individual sabre, 1st round to finals

GYMNASTICS

Women's compulsory

JUDO

Men's and women's half-heavyweight, prelims, repechage and finals

SHOOTING

Men's trap, prelims to finals

Women's 10-metre air pistol, prelims to finals

SOCCER

(Men)

Italy vs. Australia

South Korea vs. Brazil

Japan vs. Nigeria

(Women)

Germany vs. Japan

Sweden vs. China

Denmark vs. U.S.

SWIMMING

Women's 200 freestyle, prelims to finals

Men's 400 individual medley, prelims to finals

Women's 100 breaststroke, prelims to finals

Men's 800 freestyle relay, prelims to finals

VOLLEYBALL

(Men)

Finland vs. Netherlands

South Korea vs. Italy

Yugoslavia vs. Cuba

France vs. U.S.

Brazil vs. Argentina

WRESTLING

55kg, Group B

55kg, Group A finals

WESTLING

(GRECO-ROMAN)

57kg, 68kg, 82kg

100kg classification: 10

medal matches.

GOREN BRIDGE

WITH OMAR SHARIF & TAMMAM HIRSH

WEEKLY BRIDGE QUIZ

Q1 - As South vulnerable, you

bid:

47 785 1A104 4A38762

The bidding has proceeded:

NORTH EAST SOUTH WEST

1c Pass 2c Pass

3c Pass 4c Pass

What do you bid now?

Q2 - As South vulnerable, you

bid:

47 785 1A103 4J1043

The bidding has proceeded:

NORTH EAST SOUTH WEST

1c Pass 2c Pass

3c Pass 4c Pass

What do you respond?

Q3 - Both vulnerable, as South

you bid:

47 785 1A103 4J1043

The bidding has proceeded:

NORTH EAST SOUTH WEST

1c Pass 2c Pass

3c Pass 4c Pass

What do you bid now?

Q4 - As South vulnerable, you

bid:

47 785 1A103 4J1043

The bidding has proceeded:

NORTH EAST SOUTH WEST

1c Pass 2c Pass

3c Pass 4c Pass

What do you bid now?

Q5 - As South vulnerable, you

bid:

47 785 1A103 4J1043

The bidding has proceeded:

NORTH EAST SOUTH WEST

1c Pass 2c Pass

3c Pass 4c Pass

What do you bid now?

Q6 - As South vulnerable, you

bid:

47 785 1A103 4J1043

The bidding has proceeded:

NORTH EAST SOUTH WEST

1c Pass 2c Pass

3c Pass 4c Pass

What do you bid now?

Q7 - As South vulnerable, you

bid:

47 785 1A103 4J1043

The bidding has proceeded:

NORTH EAST SOUTH WEST

1c Pass 2c Pass

3c Pass 4c Pass

What do you bid now?

Q8 - As South vulnerable, you

bid:

47 785 1A103 4J1043

The bidding has proceeded:

NORTH EAST SOUTH WEST

1c Pass 2c Pass

3c Pass 4c Pass

What do you bid now?

Q9 - As South vulnerable, you

bid:

47 785 1A103 4J1043

The bidding has proceeded:

NORTH EAST SOUTH WEST

1c Pass 2c Pass

3c Pass 4c Pass

What do you bid now?

Q10 - As South vulnerable, you

bid:

47 785 1A103 4J1043

The bidding has proceeded:

NORTH EAST SOUTH WEST

1c Pass 2c Pass

3c Pass 4c Pass

What do you bid now?

Q11 - As South vulnerable, you

bid:

47 785 1A103 4J1043

The bidding has proceeded:

NORTH EAST SOUTH WEST

1c Pass 2c Pass

3c Pass 4c Pass

What do you bid now?

Q12 - As South vulnerable, you

bid:

47 785 1A103 4J1043

The bidding has proceeded:

NORTH EAST SOUTH WEST

1c Pass 2c Pass

3c Pass 4c Pass

What do you bid now?

Q13 - As South vulnerable, you

bid:

47 785 1A103 4J1043

The bidding has proceeded:

NORTH EAST SOUTH WEST

1c Pass 2c Pass

3c Pass 4c Pass

What do you bid now?

Q14 - As South vulnerable, you

bid:

47 785 1A103 4J1043

The bidding has proceeded:

NORTH EAST SOUTH WEST

1c Pass 2c Pass

3c Pass 4c Pass

What do you bid now?

Q15 - As South vulnerable, you

bid:

47 785 1A103 4J1043

The bidding has proceeded:

NORTH EAST SOUTH WEST

1c Pass 2c Pass

3c Pass 4c Pass

What do you bid now?

Q16 - As South vulnerable, you

bid:

47 785 1A103 4J1043

The bidding has proceeded:

NORTH EAST SOUTH WEST

1c Pass 2c Pass

3c Pass 4c Pass



Atlanta 1996

Olympic schedule for Sunday, July 22

BASEBALL

Cuba vs. South Korea

BASKETBALL

USA vs. China

BOXING

USA vs. Cuba

GYMNASICS

USA vs. China

SHOOTING

USA vs. China

SOCCER

USA vs. China

SWIMMING

USA vs. China

TENNIS

USA vs. China

VOLLEYBALL

USA vs. China

WRESTLING

USA vs. China

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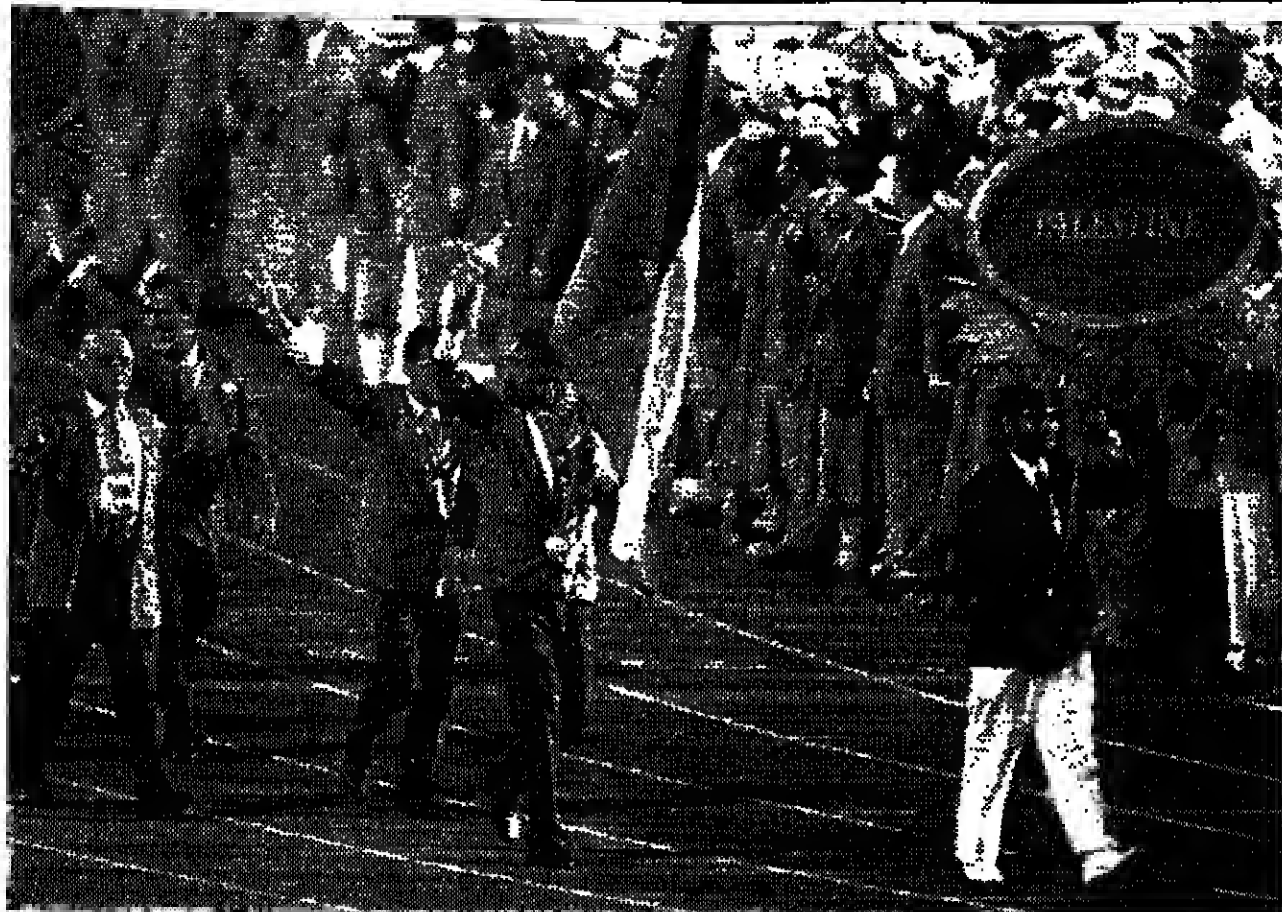
USA vs. China

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USA vs. China



Members of the Palestinian delegation, the first ever sent to the Olympics, wave as they arrive at the Olympic Stadium during the opening ceremonies of the XXVI Centennial Olympic Games in Atlanta (Reuters photo)

Palestine marches on to Olympic stage

ATLANTA (R) — Palestine proudly made its entry on the Olympic stage Friday as a record 197 countries put aside political differences and marched together at the opening ceremony of the Atlanta Games.

The small Bosnian team were led into the stadium by marathon runner Islam Dzugum, the only team member who stayed in Bosnia for the entire recent war. He defied snipers by running through the streets of Sarajevo to train when the city was under siege from Bosnian Serb guns.

The two-athlete Palestine squad, marching behind the new country's green, red, white and black flag, was one of 10 making their debut at the first Games where every invitation from the International Olympic committee was accepted.

But one country, Eritrea, was not invited. Two Eritrean cyclists flew into Atlanta on Friday with tickets to the opening cere-

mony but they were not allowed to take part in the march past because their country does not fulfil the requirements of the Olympic charter.

"This is a historical moment — a great moment to see our delegation among all the other delegations, to see our flag raised between all the other flags and to hear our national anthem," said Palestine team spokesman Saad Hakoura.

Hakoura said Palestine's delegation had been warmly welcomed by others at the Centenary Games. They had yet to meet Israel's team but he was sure there would be no problems.

"We treat everyone the same, equal. We are sporting athletes and we have the spirit of peace," he said. Israel had demanded the Palestine team operate under the name "Palestine Authority", because it claimed the name Palestine violated guidelines of peace accords in the region.

The IOC refused to countenance a change. In 1972 Palestinian guerrillas killed 11 Israeli athletes at the Munich Olympics.

Athletes from Dominica, Guinea-Bissau and Burundi were also present for the first time, marching into the Olympic stadium with squads from former Soviet republics such as Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan who have also never taken part under their own flag.

At the 1992 Games in Barcelona, Estonia, Lithuania and Latvia put out independent teams but the remaining ex-Soviet republics competed as the unified team. Individual winners had the flags from their own republics raised at medal ceremonies.

Hong Kong's team paraded for the last time before China takes it over in 1997, although the British colony will be allowed to maintain its Olympic identity.

South Korea marched behind a banner reading "Korea" while its northern

neighbour and sworn enemy was included among the countries beginning with P, marching as the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

In Barcelona the Yugoslav team was made to pay for its military aggression, marching in the opening ceremony under an Olympic flag. It was banned from team sports but individual athletes were allowed to compete.

In Atlanta they are back as a full team. But the bloody war in the Balkans remains firmly in the mind of some athletes.

Samir Karabasic was one of six potential Olympic canoeists in Bosnia when the war started. The others are now dead.

"To represent not only Bosnia but also all the people killed for freedom in Bosnia, that's what it means for me," said table tennis player Tarik Hodzic this week.

Bevilacqua vows to compete despite ban threat

ATLANTA (R) — Italy's leading high jumper Antonella Bevilacqua, under the threat of a doping ban, vowed on Friday to fight any efforts to stop her competing in the Olympics.

"I'm clean. Competing means a lot to me and I'm determined to be there," she said in a telephone interview from her home in the

southern Italian town of Foggia.

"If they ban me I will lodge an appeal so that I can continue to compete."

"I would cry if I were to win a medal and they then took it away from me. But the thing they can't take away is my dignity."

Bevilacqua plans to travel to Atlanta on Monday and

take her place in the Italian team despite indications that the International Amateur Athletic Federation (IAAF) is poised to suspend her following two positive drug tests.

Bevilacqua, one of the top six jumpers in the world this year, was caught with the banned stimulant ephedrine in her body twice

in May.

However, an Italian panel accepted her defence that she took the substance by mistake in a Chinese herbal medicine she bought over-the-counter to lose weight.

The panel opted not to impose the compulsory three-month suspension.

Games begin with world record and controversy

ATLANTA (AFP) — The Atlanta Olympics started at a scorching pace Saturday with a world record, an Olympic champion disqualified and plenty of upset in the first few hours.

Poland's Renata Mauer won the first gold medal of the 26th Olympiad, opened at a spectacular ceremony on Friday night. The 27-year-old Mauer came from behind in the final round of shooting to beat Germany's Petra Hornberger in the women's air rifle competition.

But Belgium's Fred Deburghgraeve grabbed the immediate attention, slicing 35 hundredths of a second off the 100m breaststroke world record, barely an hour into the first day of the swimming.

The European champion showed up for the heats with his head shaved and clocked 1min 00.60sec, beating the 1:00.95 of Hungarian Karoly Guttler in

Sheffield, England, on August 3, 1993.

"He wanted to break the world record in the morning, just to say, 'hey, I'm here,'" coach Ronald Gasten said.

"I think this evening I can go one or two tenths faster than this. In the evening, anything can happen," said the 23-year-old.

Reigning heavyweight judo champion David Khakhaleichvili was forced out of the competition before he could even step onto the mat.

The 26-year-old Georgian was told the weigh-in would be at the stadium but when he arrived just after 7:00 a.m. he was told it was back in the athlete's village.

A frantic Khakhaleichvili rushed back but the weigh-in was all over by the time he arrived. "It is embarrassing but there is nothing we can do," said an official at the stadium.

The Georgian pleaded to

be allowed to defend his Olympic title but the International Judo Federation stood by a decision to expel him. "We are sorry but the rules are rules. I had to take the decision," said federation president Park Young-Sun of South Korea.

It was a bitter blow for Khakhaleichvili who has pulled himself out of a slump since his Barcelona triumph by winning this year's European Championships. Double world champion David Douillet of France should now face Japan's Naoya Ogawa in the final.

The other early upset came when Javier Arana slammed in a penalty corner to propel Spain to a 1-0 victory over defending champions Germany in the first match of the men's hockey.

Agassi opens against Bjorkman

ATLANTA (AFP) — Top seed Andre Agassi faces a tricky start to his bid for the Olympic tennis gold next week, when he takes on Swedish doubles specialist Jonas Bjorkman.

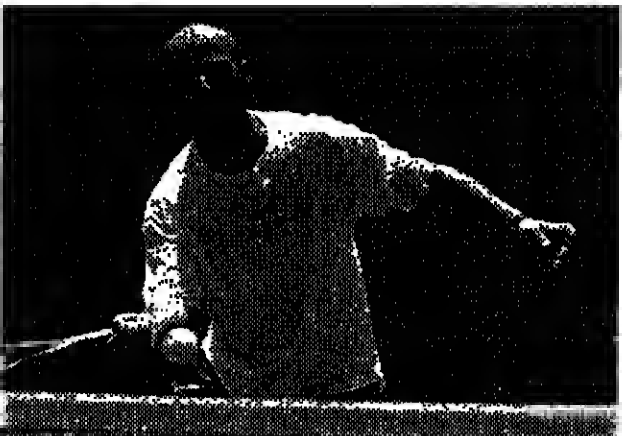
Second seeded Goran Ivanisevic of Croatia will not have an easy life either against South African Marcos Ondruska, while third seed Thomas Enqvist meets Germany's Marc Goellner.

Despite a dismal season on the ATP Tour, in which he has made early exits from both Wimbledon and the French Open, Agassi is determined to live up to his country's hopes for a tennis gold.

"Being here is a great moment in my life and I want to make it everything that it can be," said the American. "And that means going out there and busting my ass to win it, that's the bottom line."

Bjorkman, who has one world title and nine tournament victories in his doubles career, also reached the singles semifinals of the Rosmalen tournament just before Wimbledon.

If his poor run of form



USA's Andre Agassi returns a ball to compatriot Maliwa Washington during a training session at the central court of Stone Mountain's tennis venue (Reuters photo)

comes to an end here, Agassi has a seeded quarter-final against Wayne Ferreira — unless the South African is upset by British number one Tim Henman, who opens against Japan's Shuzo Matsuoka.

Ivanisevic is due for a quarter-final against Spaniard Alberto Costa, and a last-four encounter with Maliwa Washington, the losing Wimbledon finalist who can count on massive support from the Atlanta crowd.

Defending Olympic champion Marc Rosset of Switzerland begins his campaign against Moroccan Hicham Arazi.

The women's draw of 64 was kinder to top ranked Monica Seles, who meets Chinese unknown Chen Li, while in the bottom half Conchita Martinez takes on Swiss player Patty Schnyder.

With Seles still dogged by a shoulder injury, there is no reason to rule out an all-spanish final, with Arantxa Sanchez Vicario due to meet Yugoslav-born Seles in the semis.

GOREN BRIDGE

WITH OMAR SHARIF & TAMAR HIRSCH
WEEKLY BRIDGE QUIZ

Q.1 - As South vulnerable, you hold:

AK7 095 0A104 4AJS762

The bidding has proceeded:

NORTH EAST SOUTH WEST

1a Pass 2a Pass

3a Pass 4a Pass

What do you bid now?

Q.2 - As South, vulnerable, you hold:

4J72 0K9 0A1095 4J1043

The bidding has proceeded:

NORTH EAST SOUTH WEST

1a Pass 2a Pass

3a Pass 4a Pass

What do you respond?

Q.3 - Both vulnerable, as South you hold:

41096 07 0QJ1075 4QJ104

The bidding has proceeded:

NORTH EAST SOUTH WEST

1a Pass 2a Pass

3a Pass 4a Pass

What action do you take?

Q.4 - As South, vulnerable, you hold:

443 0AS 0AKS 4AQ10763

Partner opens the bidding with one spade. What do you respond?

Q.5 - As South, vulnerable, you hold:

4Q8 095 0KQJ7043 483

The bidding has proceeded:

NORTH EAST SOUTH WEST

1a Pass 2a Pass

3a Pass 4a Pass

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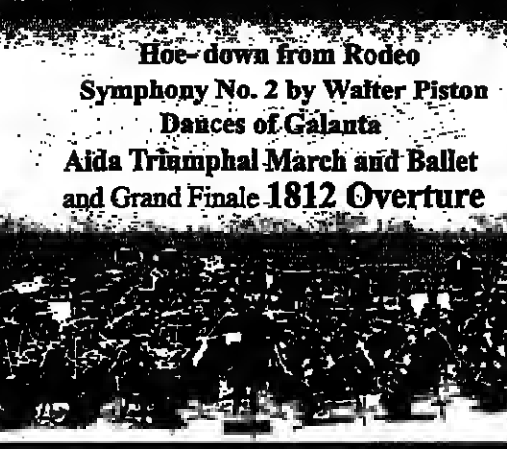
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An Israeli mounted policeman uses his horse to push ultra-orthodox Jews off Bar Ilan Street, a main Jerusalem artery that runs through a religious neighbourhood Saturday (Reuters photo)

Ultra-orthodox Jews clash with police

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM (AP) — Thousands of ultra-orthodox Jewish demonstrators clashed with police Saturday in what was seen as an increasingly violent conflict over the future character of Jerusalem.

The black-clad demonstrators threw stones at police and passing cars. City police chief Arieh Amit said he was too pelted with stones.

Police fired water-cannos and mounted police pushed the demonstrators back as they tried, time and again, to block a main highway to traffic.

The ultra-orthodox are campaigning to have Bar Ilan Street closed to traffic on the Jewish Sabbath. The arterial road passes through an ultra-orthodox neighbourhood but also serves

thousands of secular residents in adjacent districts, as well as a major city hospital.

Secular groups, led by the left-wing Meretz Party, held a counter-demonstration, though in smaller numbers, about 200 yards from the ultra-orthodox. Police, kept the two groups apart.

"If they close this road they'll start closing other roads, and the pubs and the cafes and the discos," said Gal Cohen, who wore a Meretz sticker on his shirt. "You don't have the right to come here on the Sabbath and disturb my rest," shouted one of the ultra-orthodox.

Legislator Rabbi Shlomo Ben-Zvi, of the ultra-orthodox Shas Party, told the Associated Press "if they (the secular groups) want a

war they can have a war." The religious demonstrators heaped abuse on the police. "You call yourself a Jew. You're a Nazi," one of them shouted.

Mr. Amit said he was used to this. "If I were not called a Nazi several times on Saturday I wouldn't know what day of the week it was," he quipped.

Three of the ultra-orthodox were arrested for throwing stones, the police said. In the recent elections the religious parties won an unprecedented 24 of the 120 seats in parliament and are seen as holding the balance of power. All four religious parties are in the new government coalition.

Religious party leaders deny that they intend to close other main highways in north Jerusalem, but one

of the more militant Jerusalem ultra-orthodox leaders Yehuda Meshi-Zahav, openly admits that this is the plan. "We are prepared to close even the entrance to town," he told Israel Television's Channel 1. "We are not scared."

Irit Shoshani, 25, who grew up in Jerusalem but is now a student at Tel Aviv University, told the AP: "I left this city because it no longer suits our lifestyle. It is important that Jerusalem should not turn into one big religious neighbourhood."

Between five and six hundred police were present at the demonstration, spokesman Shmuel Beor-Ruby said.

The ultra-orthodox demonstrators numbered about 5,000 and the secular demonstrators about 1,000.

'Despite uncertainties, Jordan optimistic about peace process'

By Emile S. Siman
USIA

WASHINGTON — Jordan's envoy to the United States expressed optimism that the Middle East peace process will pull through in the wake of the election of Benjamin Netanyahu and his Likud-led alliance, saying, "the door is still open," and "what we need is a more intensified dialogue" between the parties.

The ambassador, Faysal Tarawneh, was speaking to a group of foreign journalists at a briefing sponsored by the Washington-based Foreign Correspondents Association July 18. He responded to a number of questions dealing mainly with Israeli-Arab relations and the peace process.

Dr. Tarawneh said that Jordan is "affected by ambiguities and uncertainty," especially those relating to the Palestinian issue, a reference to the Israeli

prime minister's positions on several Palestinian-Israeli questions, despite his avowed adherence to all agreements concluded between his predecessor and the Palestinian National Authority.

The ambassador said, nonetheless, that the "dividends and fruits of peace" will contribute to "the improvement in the quality of life of the Jordanians."

He also hailed the recent Arab summit, saying that for the first time "there is an Arab declaration that peace is a strategic option" and called it a "message of peace" and a "real development." He emphasized that U.N. Security Council Resolutions 242 and 338 remain terms of reference for a future peace settlement, but noted that security is an underpinning of that peace based on return of land.

There are three "pillars," he maintained, and these are peace, land and security, and their order is subject to negotiations. If there is to be peace with security, then land should be a basic ingredient.

Invoking a precept of the United Nations Charter, Dr. Tarawneh said territory cannot be acquired by war or force.

The ambassador expressed optimism because there is "a commitment to the (peace) process and all the achievements of this process," adding that the final status issues will be based on Resolution 242. He also downplayed Mr. Netanyahu's recent preconditions regarding the Golan Heights and Jerusalem saying, "the door should not be closed" based on Mr. Netanyahu's recent positions, since, he opined, "we are out there" whether they are "the maximalist or final positions" of the Israeli government.

Palestinian convicted in U.S. for hijacking

WASHINGTON (AFP) — A federal jury on Friday convicted a member of the radical Palestinian group Abu Nidal in connection with the 1985 hijacking of an Egyptian flight that left 59 people dead. Omar Mohammad Ali Rezaq was found guilty on one count of air piracy, U.S. attorney Eric Holder said, and could go up to life in federal prison.

Mr. Rezaq's lawyers claimed their defendant, then a member of the Abu Nidal organisation, was suffering from post traumatic stress disorder and was insane when he hijacked Egyptian Flight 648

from Athens to Cairo, diverting the plane to Malta. The defence claimed Mr. Rezaq could not be held accountable for his conduct because of his mental state.

But the jury handed down a guilty verdict Friday for Mr. Rezaq, who shot five passengers during the hijacking.

An Israeli and a U.S. citizen died from the gunshot wounds. Another 57 people died when Egyptian commandos stormed the plane in Malta. Mr. Rezaq escaped from the plane but was later captured by Maltese authorities.

UNICEF trying for Olympics truce in Afghanistan

ISLAMABAD (R) — The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) said on Saturday it was negotiating with warring factions in Afghanistan to agree a truce during the Olympic Games in Atlanta.

The truce could also help a five-day second phase of a U.N.-sponsored mass immunisation campaign in Afghanistan beginning on Sunday, a UNICEF statement made available in Islamabad said. Afghan factions had observed a ceasefire during the first phase of the immunisation campaign from June 16 to 20.

"A further cessation of hostilities is being negotiated by UNICEF with the major factions in Afghanistan for the duration of the Olympics," the UNICEF statement said.

"This will allow greater access to health facilities for children and women during the immunisation campaign as well as supporting the ideal of peace at the time of the Olympic Games."

It said three million children and 1.1 million women of child-bearing age were expected to be vaccinated in the second phase that the UNICEF and the World Health Organisation (WHO) would carry out from July 21 to 25 in cooperation with the Afghan ministry of public health and non-governmental organisations.

"In this round, children will be vaccinated against polio, measles and DPT (diphtheria, pertussis — whooping cough — and tetanus) and women against tetanus. Vitamin A will also be administered to children."



Atlanta to clamp down on prostitutes

ATLANTA (R) — Atlanta's police chief Thursday promised to clamp down on prostitutes tempted to ply their trade at the centenary Olympics. "Where it pops up, we will deal with it aggressively," said Beverly Harward, the first black woman to be made chief of police in a major U.S. city. "Our big problem is not escort services but streetwalkers," she said as Atlanta welcomed two million visitors for the world's largest sporting event. As one of the south's leading convention centres, Atlanta is well used to dealing with an influx of visitors and the inevitable attentions they might receive from the world's oldest profession. But Chief Harward said there were no signs as yet of a major influx of prostitutes into Atlanta for the games. "We have not to my knowledge made any arrests of out of town prostitutes. We are basically dealing with the same people that are already here," she said in an interview.

'Adam and Eve' strip causes cathedral confusion

COLOGNE, Germany (R) — An exhibitionist couple entered Cologne's famous cathedral Friday, walked up to the altar and peeled off their clothes to reveal nothing more than a pair of "Adam and Eve"-style plant leaves covering their shame. Police said a group of photographers had accompanied the couple and caught their antics on camera before cathedral officials asked them to leave. A small scuffle then broke out and one of the photographers released 10 white mice, police said. The couple left unobserved during the confusion.

Elephant pulls through tusk operation

KIEV (R) — A seven-tonne elephant called Boy, famous in Ukraine for his long search for a mate, is back munching apples after pulling through a tricky tusk operation. The 26-year-old broke his tusk a year ago in a fit of pique and it required an international fundraising event to scratch together the \$30,000 for the operation at Kiev Zoo. "We achieved more than we wanted to achieve. We treated both tusks, and both were very infected," said elephant dentist Peter Kertesz, a British veterinarian. "Hopefully the animal is perfectly healthy now, and after a period of time for healing he will have a happy, healthy life." The Indian elephant drew applause from a 10-member international medical team as he rose groggily to his knees and then to his feet after the four-hour surgery. Medical experts filled the infected tusk much as a dentist would a tooth, and removed the other, damaged earler.

Horses in Pisa made to wear 'nappies'

PISA, Italy (AFP) — Coach-horses pulling tourists round the Tuscan town of Pisa will have to wear "nappies" so as to avoid soiling the streets, town environmental officials announced Friday. Similar paper diapers, which are thrown away in special receptacles around the Leaning Tower and the cathedral, have already been forced on the town's dogs.

Netanyahu requires unified Arab stand — scholar

By Ghalia Ajlul
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — Arabs should adopt a coordinated and clear stand towards the Likud-led government of Beoyamin Netanyahu because the Israeli government coalition that groups the Likud with the ultra rightist religious parties will not collapse without such a stand, Azmi Bshara, Arab member of the Israeli Knesset and professor of philosophy at Birzeit University said Saturday.

Dr. Bshara, who represents the Israeli Hadash, communist party in the Knesset, was speaking during a lecture at the University of Jordan's Centre for Strategic Studies on the May 29 Israeli elections that brought the Likud back to power in Israel.

He said the Arab parties to the peace process should formulate a common strategy to counter that of the new Israeli government, which is adopting new concepts different from those followed by the previous Labour-led government.

Dr. Bshara said the new

Israeli leadership belonged to the hardline Yitzhak Shamir faction in the Likud party that in 1979 abstained from voting for the Camp David accords which then proposed full autonomy for the Palestinians.

Dr. Bshara said there was an Arab attempt to look beyond what Prime Minister Netanyahu is saying for clues on his intentions.

"We (Arabs) have a lot of different perceptions on the new Israeli government," he said. "Even the Arab media are unable to decipher Netanyahu's intentions on peace although he made them clear."

He said that Mr. Netanyahu's government is capable of only making more gestures than the Labour-led government but will not offer concessions on the other substantial issues such as Jerusalem, the refugees, settlements and final status negotiations.

"Netanyahu will redeploy troops in Hebron, will meet with Palestine National Authority Leader Yasser Arafat, and the Orient House

will remain open," Dr. Bshara added.

But these moves would only gain the headline government favour with international, local and even Palestinian public opinions without allowing for progress on the core issues stalling the peace talks, Dr. Bshara said.

Dr. Bshara noted that during Mr. Netanyahu's visit to the United States this month, he announced that his government intended to expand the settlements in the West Bank by adding 400,000 new settlers in the coming four years.

Dr. Bshara said that unlike the previous Labour-led government, which did not oppose the establishment of an independent Palestinian state, the Likud leadership is completely opposed to recognising the Palestinians' right to establish their state.

The Likud government will also not be compromising on the Syrian track of the peace talks, adopting the same hardline stands it is following on the Palestinian one, he said.

Dr. Bshara said that the Likud government, while engaging the Syrians, will not

relinquish sovereignty on the Golan Heights.

"Any compromise on the Golan will lead to the collapse of the Israeli government coalition," he said.

He said that Mr. Netanyahu builds his strategy towards Syria on the notion that Damascus was not very much concerned about regaining the Golan.

"The objectives (of Syrian and Israeli) now is not to reach a peaceful settlement," he said.

What worries the Israelis is not the Syrian front, which has been very calm since the 1973 war, he said. Rather, the Israelis want peace on their northern borders with Lebanon, where Syria is the major power broker.

He added that he believed the new Israeli government would want to reach a deal with Syria under which Israel withdraws from South Lebanon while Syria guarantees no attacks on north Israel generating from Lebanon.

He said that Israel has no territorial ambitions in Lebanon.

Mediator, Hizbollah announce final prisoner swap deal

BEIRUT (AP) — A German mediator and Hizbollah's leader said Saturday they have reached a final agreement for swapping the bodies of two Israeli soldiers for scores of Shiite Muslim prisoners and guerrilla remains held by Israel.

Bernad Schmidtbauer, Chancellor Helmut Kohl's intelligence adviser, announced in Damascus that the exchange will take place Sunday.

In Lebanon, Hizbollah's leader, Sheikh Hassan Nasrallah, said the Iranian-backed fundamentalist group has endorsed the German-brokered deal.

Sheikh Nasrallah made the announcement on Hizbollah's Al Manar Television and Al Noor Radio shortly after returning from Damascus.

"We will execute this agreement tomorrow, Sunday," he said, noting that the International Committee of the

Red Cross will supervise the exchange.

Sheikh Nasrallah hailed the deal as "an advanced step on the road to resolving the issue" of Lebanese held by Israel.

"The agreement provides for the handover of all the bodies and remains of (Shiite) prisoners. It also provides for the release of a specific number of prisoners from Khiam Jail," he said.

Sheikh Nasrallah noted that priority will be given to women and wounded and sick men held at the detention camp in Israel's self-proclaimed "security zone" in the south.

He said the German mediation was supported by Iran and Syria.

Iran is Hizbollah's mentor and bankroller, Syria, the main power in Lebanon with 40,000 troops deployed, is an ally of Iran.

Sheikh Nasrallah and Mr. Schmidtbauer declined to say



Hizbollah Secretary General Sheikh Hassan Nasrallah is guarded by a guerrilla as he speaks in a ceremony of late Iranian leader Ayatollah Khomeini in Beirut last month in this Reuters file photo

how many prisoners and guerrilla remains would be sent back. But Lebanese Foreign Minister Fawzi Bweiz said this week that 135 Lebanese will

be freed. Hizbollah has mentioned 100 guerrillas killed in fighting with Israeli troops in South Lebanon over the past 10

years. The Sunday deadline was set by Mr. Schmidtbauer after a meeting in Beirut Friday with Interior Minister Michel Murr.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Jerusalem's unity does not mean Israeli control

CAIRO (AFP) — Egyptian Foreign Minister Amr Moussa said preserving the unity of Jerusalem does not mean the entire Holy City belongs to Jerusalem, the press reported on Saturday. Mr. Moussa, quoted by the daily Al-Ahram Al-Misri, said "the question of Jerusalem must be clarified on certain points" after talks Thursday between President Hosni Mubarak and Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu. At the meeting, Mr. Mubarak backed the unity of the Holy City, saying Arabs did not seek "to divide the city or put a wall in it". Preserving Jerusalem's unity "is a completely different matter from the decision to annex the city," Mr. Moussa said, referring to Israel's 1967 annexation of Arab East Jerusalem. Jerusalem's unity "is guaranteed by the United Nations. The Arab countries have supported its unity since the 1950s," Mr. Moussa said. But the occupied eastern sector is "governed by U.N. resolution 242, which forms one of the bases of the peace process" and calls for an Israeli withdrawal from lands occupied in 1967. Israel's annexation of East Jerusalem has "never been accepted by any state because it is an illegitimate decision," he said.

Bomb in Algerian cafe kills five

PARIS (R) — Five people died and 30 were wounded when a bomb exploded in a cafe in Algeria on Saturday, the official Algerian news agency APS said. Five of the wounded were seriously hurt by the blast in the Cafe du Sport in Kolea, about 30 kilometres west of the capital Algiers, it said. APS quoted a statement from Algerian security services. On Thursday, the Algerian newspaper Al-Wakef reported that a bomb on Wednesday in a cafe in the central Algerian town of Bida, considered a stronghold of Muslim guerrillas, killed at least 10 people. Scores of people have been killed in bomb attacks since political violence erupted in early 1992 when authorities cancelled a general election that the Islamic Salvation Front (FIS) was set to win.

Iran offers to exchange remains of 400 Iraqis

TEHRAN (AFP) — Iran has offered to exchange the remains of 400 Iraqi soldiers with those of Iranians killed during the two countries' 1980-1988 war, newspapers reported Saturday. An Iranian army officer, whose identity was not revealed, told the papers that Iran was ready to hand over the bodies by August 13. In June, Iran exchanged the remains of 200 Iraqi soldiers with those of 144 of its own at the border region of Shalamchah. Tehran asked Baghdad earlier this year to cooperate in the search for the bodies. The remains of around 25,000 soldiers have been discovered since the end of war in August 1988. The authorities said in January that they had found the remains of a "large number" of Iraqi soldiers on Iranian soil. The conflict left around 300,000 Iraqis dead, 500,000 wounded and 380,000 disabled.

Iran condoles France for TWA crash, but not U.S.

TEHRAN (AP) — Iran has expressed "heartfelt sorrow" over the TWA air disaster, the official Islamic Republic News Agency said. It quoted foreign ministry spokesman Mohammad Mohammadi as saying Friday that Iran sympathised with the "bereaved families" who lost loved ones when the Paris-bound flight 800 exploded Wednesday shortly after takeoff from New York. Mr. Mohammadi said that "since many of those who lost their lives were French, the ministry also expressed its condolences to the French government and nation." However, he did not extend condolences to the U.S. government, even though most of the 230 people who were aboard the ill-fated flight were Americans.

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